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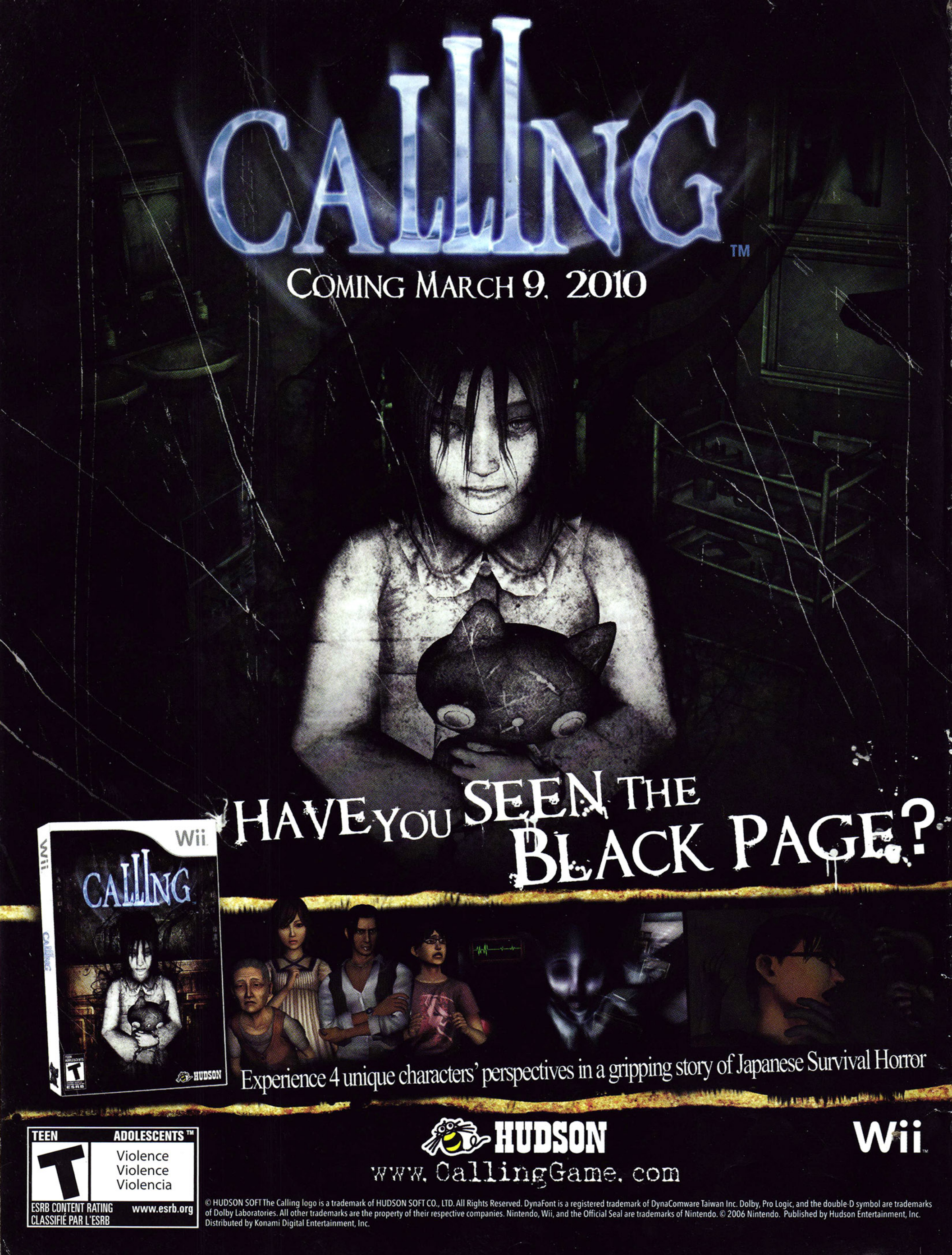

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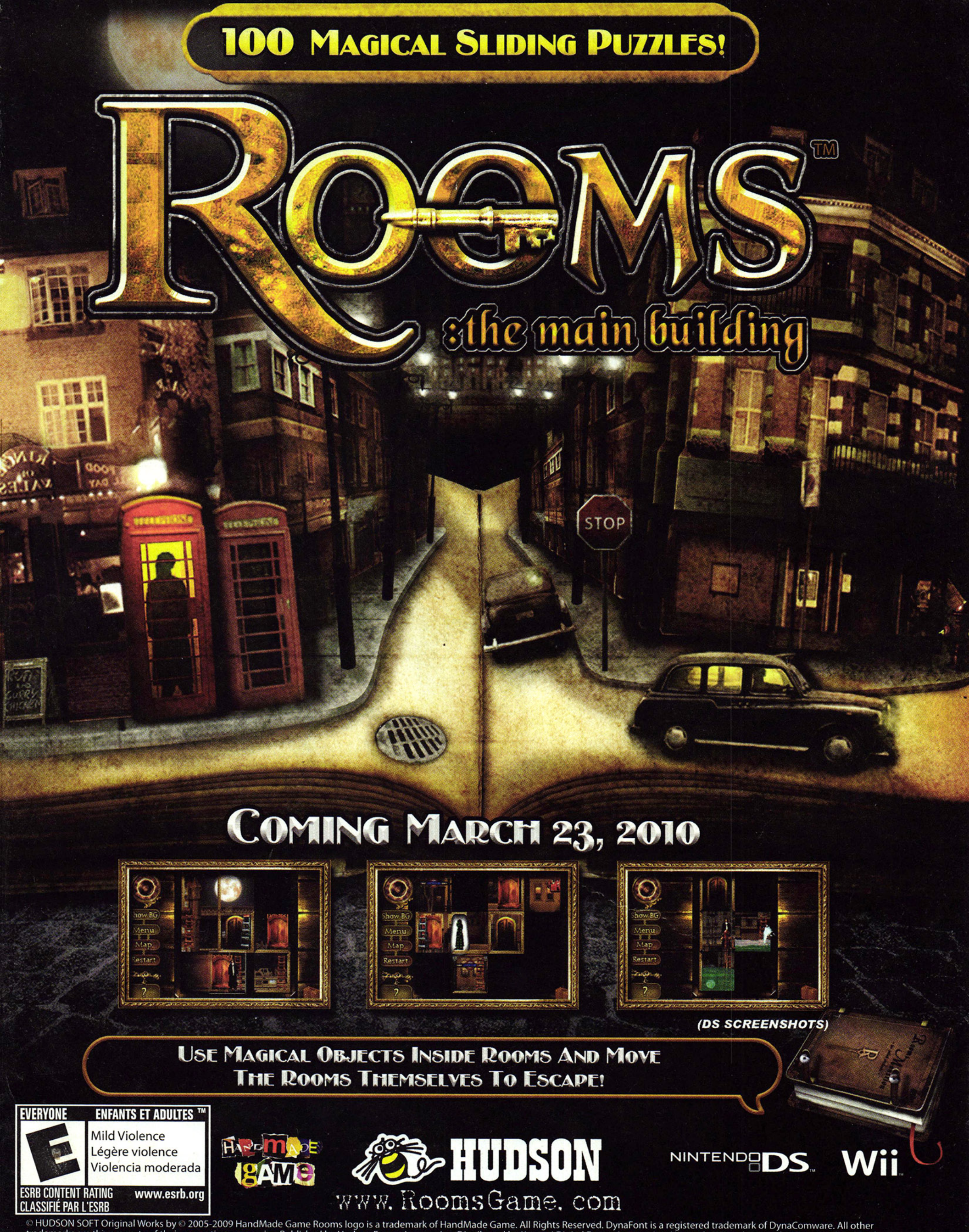
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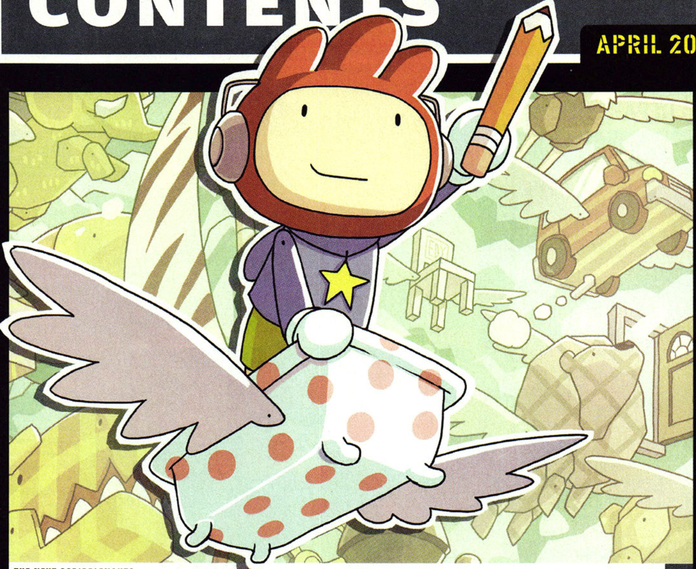

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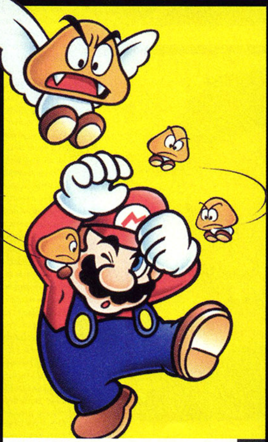

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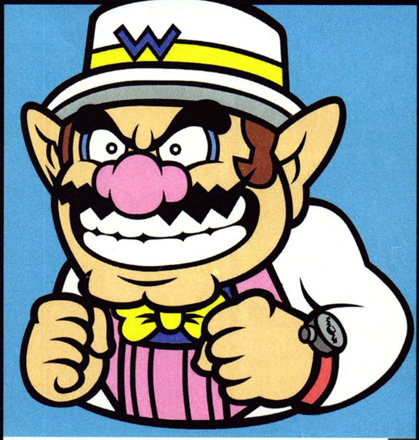

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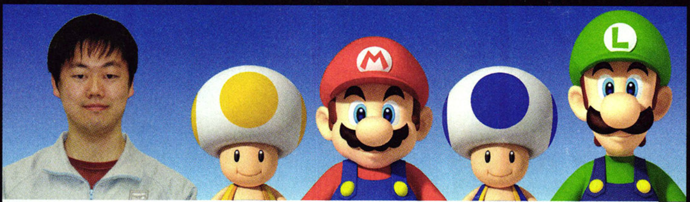

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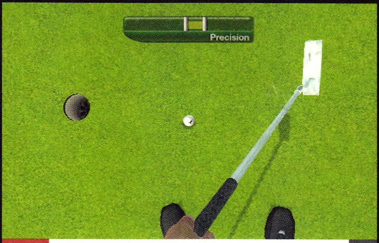

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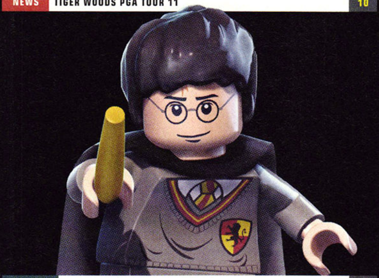

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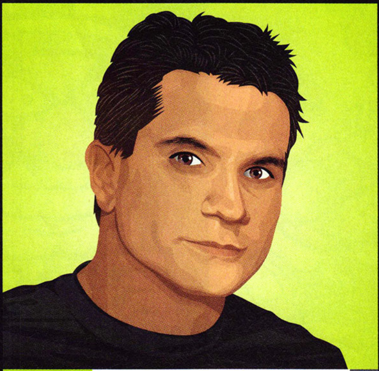

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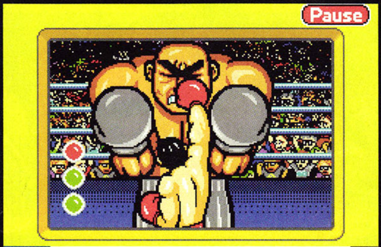

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DS = NINTENDO DS
DW = DSiWARE
NES = NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SNES = SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
VC = VIRTUAL CONSOLE
Wii = Wii
WW = WiiWARE

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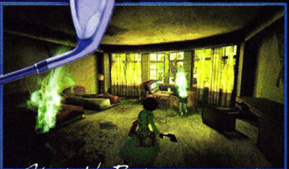

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Creativity Is King

Chris Slate

I like to think of myself as a creative guy, which may be one of the reasons I'm drawn to video games, and Nintendo titles in particular. Even as far back as Super Mario Bros. and The Legend of Zelda on NES, I've always enjoyed the ways in which Nintendo games encourage self-expression. My favorite ones let you find your own way and reward you for going off the beaten path. Today's systems are designed to inspire creativity more than ever before. In this month's issue alone, we make our own games with WarioWare D.I.Y., draw our way past problems in Max & the Magic Marker, and ponder the endless possibilities of the next Scribblenauts. There's something to be said for the occasional binge of mindless action, but games that encourage the imagination, that make you think, often leave a more lasting impact.

CHRIS SLATE **EDITOR IN CHIEF**

Wii
FRESH PRINCE!
FIRST LOOK at Prince of Persia: The Forgotten Sands
SPECIAL AWARDS ISSUE!
NINTENDO POWER
REVEALED The WILDEST Wii FIGHTING GAME YET!
THE LEGENDS RETURN!
Two classic Pokémon games are reborn as Pokémon HeartGold and SoulSilver Versions for DS!
Future

V252 **MARCH 2010**

Chris Slate here, back once again to answer your letters while wearing a Tanooki Suit. But first, this month's special letter request: what kind of microgame would you like to make with WarioWare D.I.Y.? (See page 58 for inspiration.) Send your responses to the address on page 8, and we'll print the best ones!

LETTERS

Man on a Mission

I was very pleasantly surprised to see that Metroid: Zero Mission made Nintendo Power's Best of the Decade list in Volume 252. I personally find Zero Mission to be one of the finest games in the Metroid series, with graphics that push the GBA, a killer updated soundtrack, and extra moments that weren't in the original NES game. Thank you for recognizing the brilliance of one of the best handheld games of all time. **—(NO NAME GIVEN)**

Wait for It....

I hope Nintendo makes a sequel to Mario & Luigi: Bowser's Inside Story—they could call it *Peach's* Inside Story. The royal palace could get shrunk and Peach could swallow it, forcing everyone to explore within her. Then, every time Mario and Luigi get to the end of an area, Toad could say, "Thank you Mario, but our castle is in another princess."

—TIM THE ENCHANTER

I just simultaneously laughed and groaned for the first time ever, and the noise seemed to frighten my cubicle neighbor, Chris Imlay. Admit it: you thought of the punchline first and worked backward from there, didn't you?

Ultimate Update

If only you had printed Volume 248's Ultimate Zelda article a month or two later, you would have included Spirit Tracks on your ranked list of Zelda games, right? Where would you have placed it?

—(NO NAME GIVEN)

Good question! I asked myself that as soon as I saw the credits roll on Spirit Tracks, but never decided. Since you asked, I conferred with the rest of the NP Zelda Council and we decided to slot it right above Phantom Hourglass as the best DS Zelda, and the second-best handheld Zelda overall behind the Game Boy's Link's Awakening. Here's the full, updated list:

01. The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time
02. The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past
03. The Legend of Zelda
04. The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess
05. The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening/DX
06. The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker
07. The Legend of Zelda: Spirit Tracks
08. The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass
09. The Legend of Zelda: The Minish Cap
10/11. The Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Ages/Oracle of Seasons
12. The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask
13. The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords Adventures
14. Zelda II: The Adventure of Link

Your overview of the past decade of video games brought tears to my eyes. From the amazing top-10 games list (I've played every single one) to the tidbits of info and even the timeline at the bottom of every page, it was just so...beautiful. I would like to thank Nintendo for giving me so many lasting memories, and NP for being with me every step of the way. **—YETMAN**

THE TOP 10 GAMES & MORE!

The BEST of the DECADE

The '00s are over. The '10s have begun. Find out which games are the best of the best.

#10 The World Ends with You (DS)

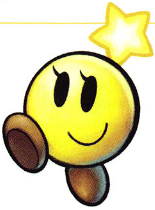
Craze of the Decade: Pokémon

#9 Mario Kart Wii (Wii)

Daisy-Dizzy

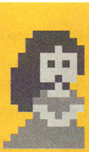
I'm a little confused. I know that Daisy is a character from the Mario Series, but where did she come from? I've never seen her in the games, excluding Mario Party and the Mario sports titles. I also know that it's her, and not Peach, who stars as the princess of the Mushroom Kingdom in the Super Mario Bros. movie. Is she, like, Peach's sister, or is she just included to be Luigi's love interest? **—(NO NAME GIVEN)**

In Mario's 1989 debut on Game Boy, Super Mario Land, Daisy was the princess of Sarasaland. Mario had to save her before she was married off to an alien named Tatanga, who planned to take over her kingdom. (Yep, that game was one odd addition to the Mario series.) Daisy next turned up as Luigi's caddy in NES Open Tournament Golf, which may be where the couple's rumored romance first sparked.



Starry-Eyed

I love your magazine, but while reading the big 250th-issue feature, I noticed that you left out a very important new character from 2009: Starlow! As a gamer girl in a community of mall-crawlers, I support girls leading the way! I mean, who doesn't love her optimistic attitude and useful advice? There is so much personality in that little Star Sprite that she may just be the new Kirby...and she can talk! (Not that I don't love the pink puffball.) I love all who are blessed with the squishy roundness, which is why I rant. Mario & Luigi: Bowser's Inside Story would not have been the same without Starlow/Chippy. Shine on, Starlow! **—RAE, DEFENDER OF SQUISHY**



[Left] Princess Daisy today, and [right] her 1989 Game Boy debut.

The Secret Scale

I love the NP review section to death and rely on it when buying games. I usually just go for the higher-rated titles, but I've started to wonder exactly what you guys mean when you rate games certain numbers. Is a seven something like, "Only buy this game if you're a fan of the series/show/genre?" And conversely, does a nine mean "You should buy this game unless you *hate* the series/show/genre?" And would a 10 be, "Buy this game or we'll track you down and sic Mr. T on you?" I must know! **—PENGUIN**

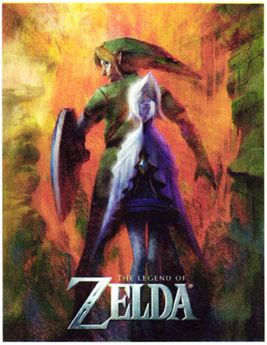
Since you asked, here's the secret Nintendo Power ratings scale: 10—Glorious; a video-gaming milestone. 9—As great as one could ever reasonably expect; a must-buy. 8—Excellent; definitely play this. 7—A pretty good game. 6—Good, but only if you're really into the style or subject matter. 5—Maybe worth renting if you love the cartoon. 4—Playing this will only make you like the movie less. 3—This isn't at all what you liked about the comic book. 2—We wouldn't even force this on Chris Shepperd. 1—Mr. T officially pities the game.

DON'T HASSLE THE HOFF

How could you score Final Fantasy a "Hmmm" and not a "Recommended?!" *Hello*! The game is 21 years old—you don't expect it to be top-notch! You should complain about things that make sense (like how the wussy Princess Peach can't defend herself from babies in New Super Mario Bros. Wii) instead of bashing the best 8-bit RPG ever. **—J.T.MARIOFAN**

The Hoff says: I could say something here about how some classic games don't hold up as well as others, but let's get to the heart of the matter: baby attacks. Vicious assaults by those crawly little buggers have been on the rise for years now. Rampant ninja crimes used to be the biggest threat to game heroes, but a ninja army is nothing compared to a drooling baby armada. And get this: somehow the baby population keeps increasing! There's no stopping them! Meanwhile, companies like Ubisoft keep making games such as Imagine: Party Babyz to perpetuate the problem.

What would guarantee 2010 as the best year ever for Nintendo gaming? Simple: the new Legend of Zelda game for Wii making it out this year. If it turns out to be nearly as creative and brilliant as the N64 games (and makes good use of the Wii MotionPlus), I am going to explode with sheer concentrated joy! **—MICHAEL O.**



What would guarantee that 2010 is your best year ever for gaming?

Here's what would make 2010 for me: a new Kirby or Donkey Kong game for Wii. We haven't seen legitimate installments in those series since the N64 era. That's 10 years without a big new game from either franchise! I love Mario, Link, and Samus as much as the next guy, but we shouldn't forget our ape friend or the Warp Star warrior. **—JCHINNJR**

What would make my 2010 is another true RPG-style Paper Mario. The Thousand Year Door is one of my all-time favorite games. Super Paper Mario was fun, but lacked much that made the series what it really is. **—NERIKO**

This would guarantee that 2010 is my best year ever for gaming: Nintendo releases the Nintendo Holodeck with Super Holodeck Mario and Holodeck Pilotwings, transforming my backyard into a virtual gaming world! **—ERIC C.**

I am crazy over the fact that Super Mario Galaxy 2 is coming out! The only thing that could make the year better would be the release of another Metroid game for DS (2-D or 3-D), or Sylux making an appearance in Metroid: Other M. That would blow me away, especially if either of the games included some kind of multiplayer. Epicness! **—(NO NAME GIVEN)**

The one thing that would make 2010 the best year ever for Nintendo is a collection of every Zelda game on one disc. I think I'd scream like a little girl, pass out, and repeat about 17 times.
—(NO NAME GIVEN)

A New Punch-Out!! with all the classic Nintendo characters in a Last Stand mode, who are available to play as in online matches after you beat them in the single-player game. **—(NO NAME GIVEN)**

I would jump for joy to see a game that teaches you how to dance to different music from around the world. **—THIERRY L.**

In addition to all of the new games coming up, the one thing that would make this year perfect is a little bit of the old. A Virtual Console release of EarthBound or the release of Mother 3 would make this year even sweeter. *PK stateside*! **—CSWRATH**

Something that would guarantee 2010 as my best year for gaming would be the release of Pikmin 3! The first two games were excellent, and from what I've seen and heard, most people liked them both. It could have controls similar to New Play Control! Pikmin. Just include a new plot, and, of course, new Pikmin colors! **—DALTON B.**

2010 would *so* be the best year ever if we got a sequel to The World Ends with You. **—PENGUIN**

The game that would probably put me into a coma until the release date would be a new Star Fox. I grew up on Star Fox 64, got the GameCube for Star Fox Adventures, still play Star Fox Assault multiplayer, and debate the possible canon ending for Star Fox Command. Not only would a new game answer the question about what really happened in Command, but it would hopefully add more story to such an unfortunately underdeveloped Nintendo franchise. Also, Peppy should say "Do a barrel roll" again, rather than "Roll to deflect enemy fire." **—FOXTROT 64**

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Understand that the magazine staff is separate from Nintendo; we don't make the games.

Don't send links to game coverage on the Web—trust us; we see it all.

Don't ask about the status of upcoming games, or whether certain games will be announced; if we have that info, we'll always tell you.

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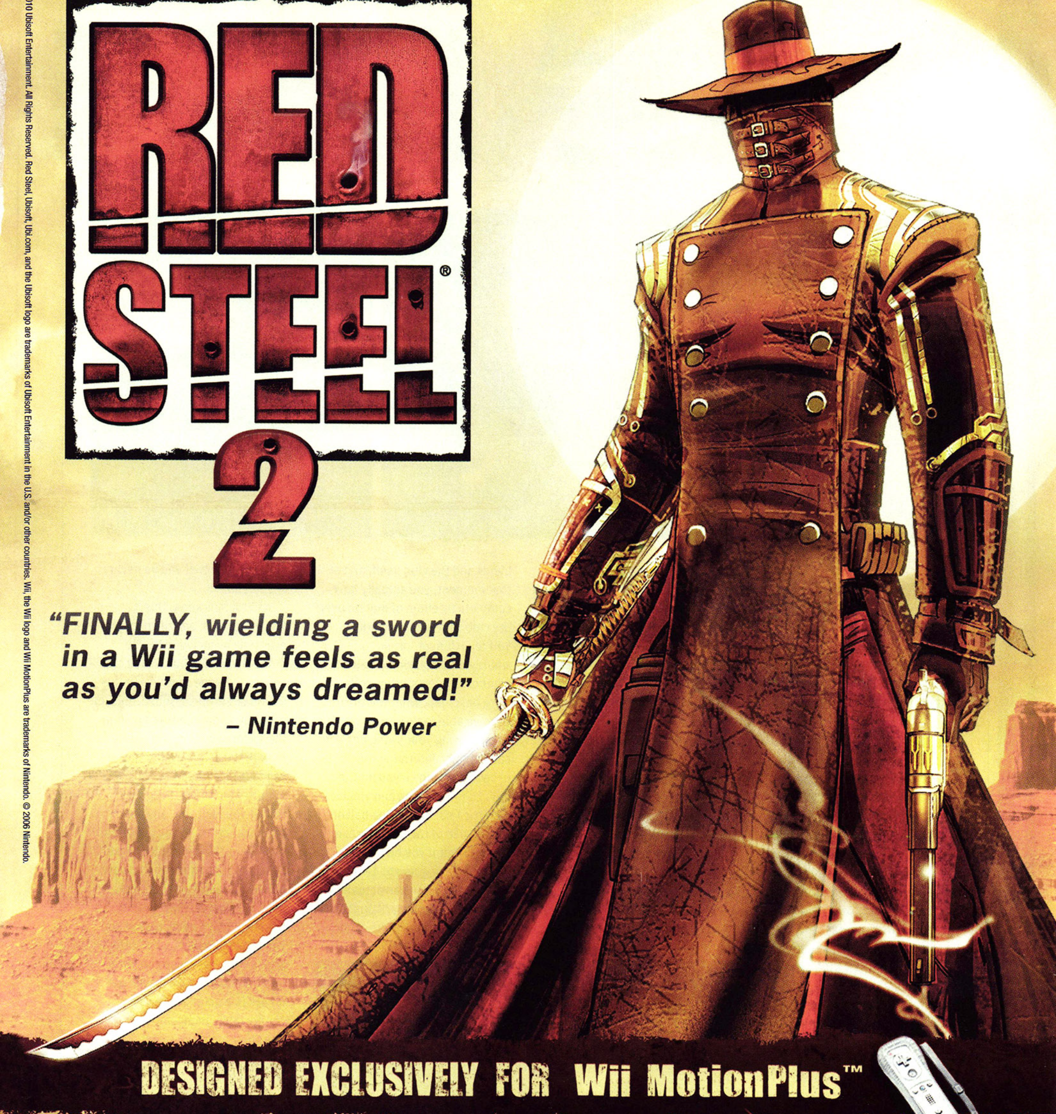

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News

ALL THE NEWS THAT'S FIT TO PLAY

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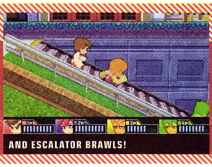
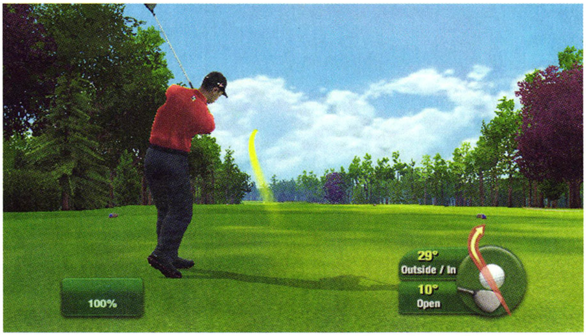
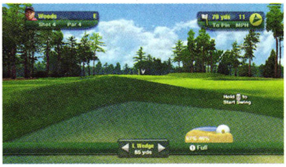
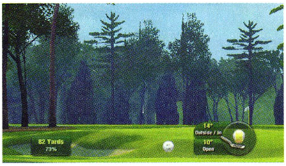
RIVER CITY GOES WILD FOR SOCCER...



AND ESCALATOR BRAWLS!







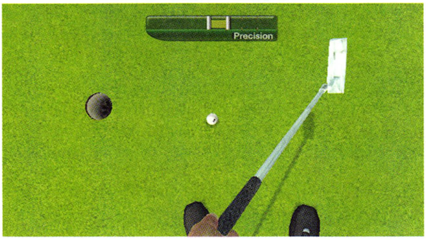
Year of the Tiger

EA Sports makes another pitch for greatness with **Tiger Woods PGA Tour 11**.

Last year's Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10 took virtual links to a whole new level, thanks in no small part to the Wii MotionPlus accessory. The Wii game earned scores of year-end award nominations and was the rare sports simulation to outsell its counterparts on other home consoles. This season, the developers at EA Tiburon look to build on that success, and it starts with adding another layer of authenticity to the Wii MotionPlus-enhanced controls.

"When you approached the ball [in last year's game], we never actually measured your swing angle or your swing plane," explains lead producer Jason Shenkman. "So regardless of how you would swing, the ball would always go straight off the tee. If you rotated your wrists, it would kind of draw or fade after the fact. This year, the game will measure your swing plane, so if you come down at an angle, the ball will actually come off the tee at an angle. It really changes the game. Our goal every year is to just pick off more and more of the swing mechanics to try to make them more realistic, and this just takes us one step closer."

Even bigger news is the addition of an all-new first-person mode called True View. As Shenkman describes it, "You're going to see the golfer's hands and the club itself, and at that moment, you actually have complete freedom of motion over the club with Wii MotionPlus. You're no longer locked to whatever animation we had on Tiger or whatever other golfers were onscreen. What this affords us to be able to do is, in addition to measuring your swing angle we can actually determine the point of contact at which you hit the ball. So if you swing and you hit it on the near side of the ball or the far side of the ball, you could shank it. But if you hit it dead center, you're going to get a really good shot. Or you can actually miss the ball entirely. [Laughs] It just immerses you in the experience in a way that you've never seen before."



First-person True View mode makes this year's game more realistic than ever. Just don't throw your Wii Remote in the drink if you miss a putt.

As PGA fans know, this is a Ryder Cup year, and the popular event will be included for the first time in PGA Tour 11. You can choose to be the captain of either the US or European squad, and you get to pick your team and pair up the golfers however you please. As with the actual event, matches will take place simultaneously, but after each hole, the game will let you jump into any match and take control of any golfer on your team. "You might look up at the scoreboard and see that your individual round is going really well, but then you look over at the third match being played and your team is losing badly," offers Shenkman. "Well, you can jump into that match, take it over, get it back to a point where you're comfortable, then jump over to any other match you want. So it's the Ryder Cup, but there's a unique element of strategy to it, as well."

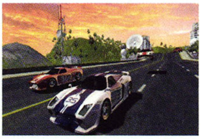
Disc golf, online tournaments, and real-time weather conditions will return from last year's game, but Shenkman is mum for now on how those elements might be improved or built upon. We'll be sure to keep you updated as the game's June tee time approaches.

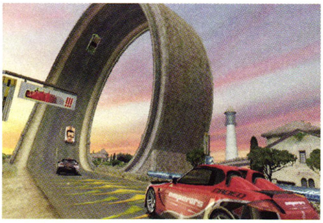
—STEVE T.

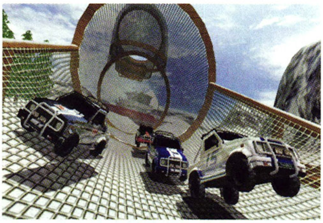
Fast Tracks for Maniacs

TrackMania revs up for its console debut on Wii.

You could be forgiven for never having heard of the TrackMania franchise; though it's been around since 2003 and got a DS release last year, it lives generally in the obscure realm of PC games that are big in Europe. If that raises a skeptical brow, know this before you inhale your next super-sized sack of freedom fries: "big" in this case means Guinness World Records. People *love* TrackMania. Fortunately, French developer Nadeo is on track to show Wii players what the fuss is about (though the release date and US publisher are undetermined at present). Better still, the Wii entry in the series is set to feature all the hallmarks of the franchise: outrageous arcade/stunt racing (think Hot Wheels rather than NASCAR), epic user-generated content (a track editor allows players to create their own tracks, then upload their masterworks for community enjoyment), and comprehensive multiplayer (including worldwide online competition). *Oui*, please! **—PATRICK C.**







Long Live the Kings

During a recent presentation in Japan, Nintendo president Satoru Iwata noted a couple of impressive milestones for the company's current hardware lineup. At the end of last year, cumulative sales of Wii hardware reached 67.45 million units worldwide, surpassing the Nintendo Entertainment System as the company's best-selling home console of all time. Likewise, Nintendo DS sales clocked in at a staggering 125.13 million units, pushing it past the Game Boy series as history's top handheld. **—STEVE T.**

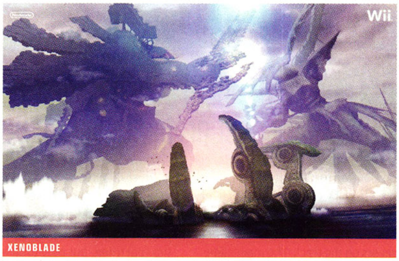
Also Announced

Color us (somewhat) surprised! During a call with investors, THQ CEO Brian Farrell said that Wii owners can expect **de Blob 2** sometime in the future.... All we know about the Wii version of Ubisoft's **Ghost Recon: Future Soldier** is that it's been designed specifically for the Nintendo system.... *Star Wars* is getting LEGO-ized once again in **LEGO Star Wars III: The Clone Wars** for Wii and DS. Unlike the previous games, however, this one's based on the popular TV show.... Are you ready for some soccer? Just in time for the World Cup comes EA's **2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa** for Wii. **—JUSTIN C.**

NEWS *from* JAPAN

Year of the JRPG?

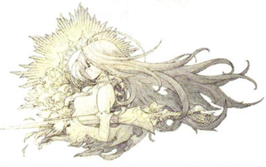
Nintendo of Japan unveils a Wii RPG lineup helmed by Final Fantasy veterans.



XENOBLADE

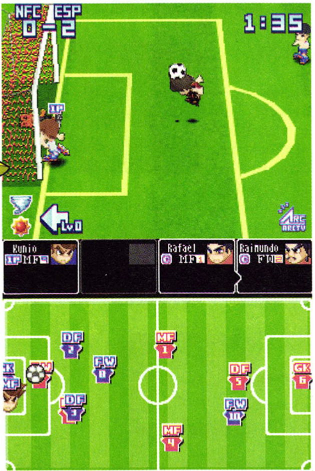
In a late-January investor's report, the Japanese arm of Nintendo revealed exciting news for Wii-owning RPG fans. Most significantly, Nintendo announced a "new type of RPG" being codeveloped by Final Fantasy creator Hironobu Sakaguchi's Mistwalker Studios. Details are vague, but the game has been titled The Last Story, and is scheduled for a Japanese release in 2010, with more information to become available on the official website (www.nintendo.co.jp/wii/slsj/) in March.

One of Sakaguchi's former employees also made a cameo in the report: Tetsuya Takahashi, who worked on the Final Fantasy series before creating Xenogears and the Xenosaga series, was confirmed to be helming the previously announced Monado: Beginning of the World. But Monado won't be called that anymore (at least not in Japan)—its new title is Xenoblade. It isn't clear whether the Xeno- prefix suggests a storyline connection to Takahashi's earlier works, or just a thematic link, but Japanese RPG fans will find out soon enough: Xenoblade has been announced for a spring release in Japan. **—CASEY L.**

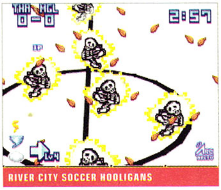


THE LAST STORY

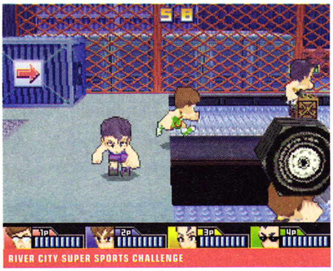
This year's World Cup would certainly be more exciting if a few teams added luchadores to their rosters.



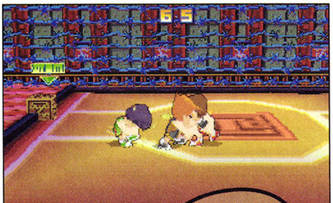
RIVER CITY SOCCER HOOLIGANS



RIVER CITY SOCCER HOOLIGANS



RIVER CITY SUPER SPORTS CHALLENGE



RIVER CITY SUPER SPORTS

Time for the Downtown-Delinquent Olympics

Compete on the streets and on the field in River City Super Sports Challenge and River City Soccer Hooligans for DS.

BACK IN THE day, developer Technos released a fistful of wild sports games in Japan starring a gang of blockheaded bad-boy characters. They showed up in America, too—most notably in River City Ransom and Super Dodge Ball for the NES—but the series was especially successful overseas, where the games are still some of the most beloved cult hits on the Famicom. Now two of those classics are getting modern makeovers as River City Super Sports Challenge and River City Soccer Hoolgans, and they're coming to the Nintendo DS handheld by way of Aksys Games.

Super Sports Challenge is an old-school track-and-field game with a River City Ransom twist. It's not just a matter of whaling on a button to make your little athlete go faster. That's part of it, of course, but so is punching, kicking, and body-slamming the other three racers on the track. The main game mode has four events: two different types of 3-D obstacle courses to race, a Treasure Scramble where competitors try to grab items from all over an enclosed arena, and a free-for-all brawling event. As the campaign goes on, the opposition gets tougher and the courses become more complex, but there's also a challenge mode with special tutorials to help you brush up on specific skills. Learning how to clobber the rest of the field with special supermoves like the Mach Kick and the Fireball Spike is a great way to take the lead and keep it for good.

River City Soccer Hooligans, meanwhile, is sort of like Super Dodge Ball if it were transplanted to a soccer pitch. It looks like the real thing, but only until somebody pops off a deadly speed-of-sound supershot.

The Soccer Hooligans duke it out with six players to a side. A 2-D view of the entire pitch appears on the bottom screen while the top screen shows a close-up view of the action in 3-D. The player controls just one member of the team—usually a midfielder—but the top screen's camera follows the ball, not the player character. When the ball sails past your hero, it's time to focus on the bottom screen and try to catch up. The player controls are surprisingly deep. Your big-headed little striker can juggle the ball off his heels, spin or slide past opponents, and launch all kinds of shots—high lobs, low bullets, or tricky backspin moves. Naturally, each of 13 national teams also has its own supershot, from England's nasty morning-star blast to Japan's teleporting shuriken shot. It's a lot to keep up with, but fans of Technos's classics should love finding their way through the game's hidden depths.

Expect River City Soccer Hooligans to arrive in May, followed by River City Super Sports Challenge in July. **—DAVID S.**

GAME WATCH *forecast*

WII

2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa	EA Sports	4/10
All Star Karate	THQ	5/10
Arc Rise Fantasia	Ignition	6/10
Attack of the Movies 3D	Majesco	5/10
Combat Wings: The Great Battles of WWII	City Interactive	4/10
de Blob 2	THQ	TBA
Def Jam Rapstar	4mm	2010
Despicable Me	D3Publisher	7/10
Epic Mickey	Disney	FALL 10
Flip's Twisted World	Majesco	4/10
Ghost Recon: Future Soldier	Ubisoft	HOL 10
Grease	505	TBA
Green Day: Rock Band	MTV	TBA
Greg Hastings Paintball 2	Majesco	9/10
The Grinder	TBA	TBA
GTI Club Supermini Festa!	Konami	SPR 10
Iron Man 2	Sega	5/10
The Legend of Zelda*	Nintendo	TBA
LEGO Harry Potter: Years 1-4	Warner Bros.	5/10
LEGO Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	LucasArts	2010
Line Attack Heroes	Nintendo	TBA
The Lord of the Rings: Aragorn's Quest	Warner Bros.	4/10
Lost in Shadow	Hudson	FALL 10
Metroid: Other M	Nintendo	2010
Monster Hunter Tri	Capcom	4/10
Mr. T	TBA	TBA
NBA Jam	EA Sports	FALL 10
Pirates Pund-Arrr	Majesco	4/10
Prince of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	Ubisoft	5/10
Pyroblazer	TBA	TBA
Rock the Dead	Conspiracy	2010
Sam & Max Season Two	Atari	TBA
Sengoku Basara Samurai Heroes	Capcom	2010
Sin and Punishment 2	Nintendo	2010
Sky Pirates of Neo Terra	Aspyr	TBA
Span Smasher	Nintendo	TBA
Stratusphere	TBA	TBA
Super Mario Galaxy 2	Nintendo	2010
Tetris	Majesco	SPR 10
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 11	EA Sports	2010
Tournament of Legends	Sega	6/10
TrackMania	TBA	TBA
Transformers: War for Cybertron	Activision	6/10
Trauma Team	Atlus	5/10

NINTENDO DS

America's Test Kitchen: Let's Get Cooking	Nintendo	3/10
Beat City	THQ	SPR 10
Dementium II	SouthPeak	4/10
Despicable Me	D3Publisher	7/10
Disciples II	Strategy First	TBA
Doodle Hex	TBA	TBA
Dragon Quest VI: Realms of Reverie	Square Enix	TBA
Duke Nukem Trilogy: Chain Reaction	Deep Silver	TBA
Duke Nukem Trilogy: Critical Mass	Deep Silver	TBA
Duke Nukem Trilogy: Proving Grounds	Deep Silver	TBA
Easy Piano	Valcon	2010
Ghost Trick	Capcom	FALL 10
Ghostwire: Link to the Paranormal	Majesco	Q4 10
Golden Sun DS	Nintendo	2010
Grease	505	TBA
House M.D.	Legacy	4/10
Iron Man 2	Sega	5/10
LEGO Harry Potter: Years 1-4	Warner Bros.	5/10
LEGO Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	LucasArts	2010
The Lord of the Rings: Aragorn's Quest	Warner Bros.	4/10
Mega Man Zero Collection	Capcom	6/10
New Scribblenauts*	Warner Bros.	FALL 10
Picross 3D	Nintendo	TBA
Pirate Battle	Orbital Media	TBA
Prince of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	Ubisoft	5/10
Project Monster	TBA	FALL 10
Puzzle Overload	Telegames	SPR 10
Puzzle Quest II	D3Publisher	5/10
River City Soccer Hooligans	Aksys	5/10
River City Super Sports Challenge	Aksys	7/10
Solitaire Overload Plus	Telegames	SPR 10
Tetris	Majesco	5/10
TNA Impact!: Cross the Line	SouthPeak	WIN 10
Transformers: War for Cybertron–Autobots	Activision	6/10
Transformers: War for Cybertron–Decepticons	Activision	6/10
Witch's Wish	Natsume	Q2 10

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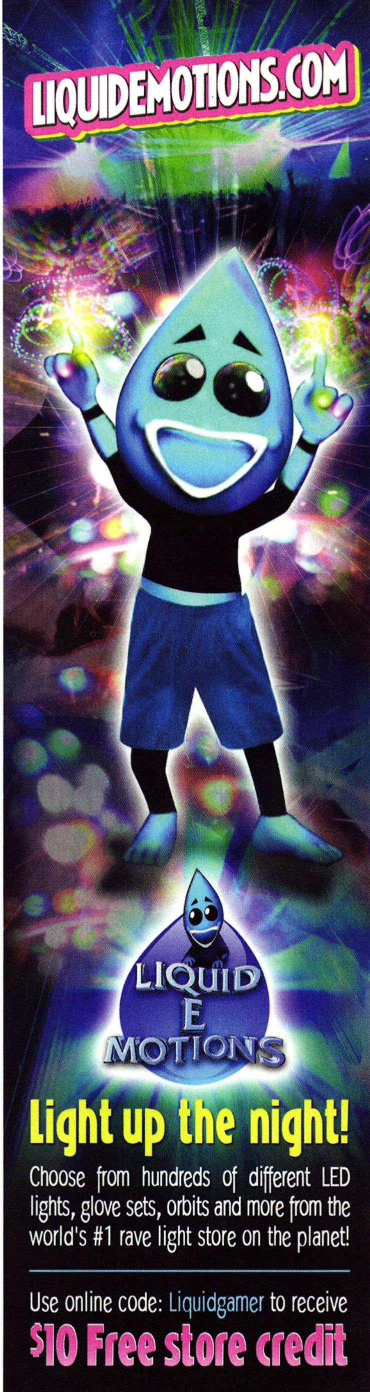

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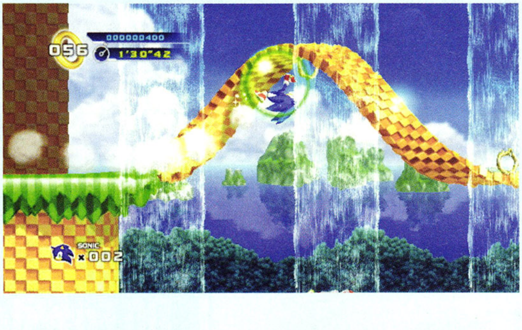
- LINK 'N' LAUNCH
- ME AND MY DOGS: FRIENDS FOREVER
- NUMBER BATTLE
- STARSHIP DEFENSE
- TRUE SWING GOLF EXPRESS
- ...and more!

True Blue

No more gimmicks. No more friends. Sega's mascot gets back to basics with Sonic the Hedgehog 4.

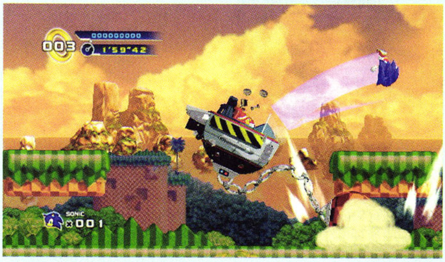
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 4. Longtime fans of the Blue Blur may need a moment to let that sink in. After all, this is the game we've been begging for since the end of the Sega Genesis days more than 15 years ago. Our pleas have finally been heard, and this summer the world's fastest hedgehog returns to his roots with a classic-style, side-scrolling platformer for WiiWare. Will it be everything we hoped for? If our first glimpse of the game in action is any indication, the answer is an emphatic "yes."



From the vintage synthesized "Saaaay-ga" to the finger-wagging title screen, Sonic 4 wastes no time getting your nostalgic juices flowing. The game's first world served as the setting for our demo and pays obvious tribute to the original title's iconic Green Hill Zone, complete with blue skies, ubiquitous palm trees, and checkerboard pattern on the ground. Everything is rendered with greater detail to take advantage of the modern hardware, but the art direction is unmistakably (and gloriously) retro.

So, too, is the gameplay. Contrary to popular belief, the 16-bit Sonic games were

[Below] After you hit Dr. Robotnik three times, he goes into a rage and starts mixing in all-new attack strategies.



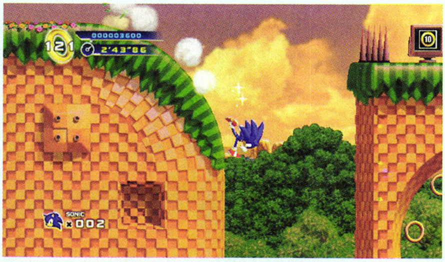
about much more than just speed. They placed a heavy emphasis on platforming and momentum-based movement. Those same elements take center stage in Sonic the Hedgehog 4, making it truly feel like a continuation of the Genesis games, as opposed to other recent 2-D efforts such as Sonic Rush. It's also got multitiered level designs, secret nooks hidden behind destructible walls, lamp-post check points, adorable woodland creatures that emerge from vanquished badniks, a spinning-leg animation when Sonic reaches top speed, as well as springs, tunnels, corkscrews, loop-de-loops, and everything else that ought to comprise an old-school Sonic game.

One inclusion that may stir up controversy among the franchise's most orthodox fans is that of the homing attack, which was first introduced in the 3-D titles and allows Sonic to zip from target to target in midair. Judging by what we've seen thus far, however, we're not too concerned. The levels have clearly been built with the new move in mind, and as a result, it seems to add to the classic formula rather than detract from it. When asked if we can expect any other new moves or power-ups, a Sega representative responded coyly, "Not in Episode I."

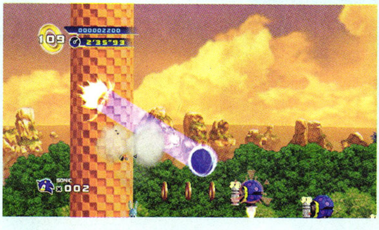
Yes, this is but the first part of the Sonic the Hedgehog 4 saga. More episodes will follow, and though Sega isn't ready to comment on just how many, the company promises that the full adventure is completely planned out and will feel like a cohesive experience. For its part, Episode I consists of four zones, each with three acts and a battle against Dr. Robotnik. Your egg-shaped nemesis will bring some of his classic creations to these encounters, but he's made a number of modifications to keep you on your toes. In the confrontation we saw, for instance, he starts by swinging a wrecking ball back and forth just as he did in the very first boss battle from the original game. Once you've hit the good doctor three times, however, he kicks it into overdrive and starts to spin the ball 360 degrees, making it far more difficult to avoid.

The game will also continue the series tradition of special stages, which you can access by finishing an act with a certain number of rings. What these stages are like remains a secret, but as always, successful completion of each one will earn you a Chaos Emerald. Should you manage to collect all the emeralds, you'll unlock a bonus cliffhanger ending that leads into Episode II. As long as it doesn't involve a certain morbidly obese cat, we'll be happy. **—STEVE T.**

TURN PAGE FOR INTERVIEW!



[Above, below] As you reach the later acts of the Splash Hill Zone, day turns to dusk.



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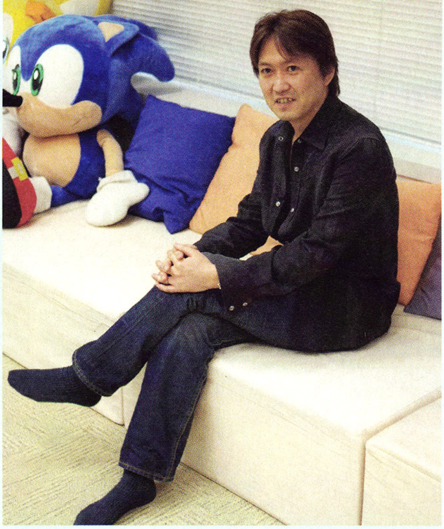

BACK IN GOOD HANDS

Development work on Sonic the Hedgehog 4 is being handled primarily by Dimps, which has experience with long-awaited fourth installments; the studio collaborated with Capcom on Street Fighter IV. The man in charge of the project, however, is Takashi Iizuka, a Sonic Team veteran who served as senior game designer on both Sonic the Hedgehog 3 and Sonic & Knuckles. We caught up with Iizuka to learn more about this year's biggest retro revival.

NINTENDO POWER **It's been more than 15 years since the release of Sonic the Hedgehog 3. Why was now finally the right time to do Sonic 4?**

TAKASHI IIZUKA Ever since Sonic Adventure was released in 1998 [in Japan], the series has evolved into something faster and more frenetic, with more extravagant actions. On the other hand, the "classic" series is still popular, and features a sense of speed specific to side-scrolling games, as well as simple, single-button gameplay. A lot of players still enjoy it on Wii Virtual Console and Xbox Live Arcade. What motivated me to develop Sonic 4 was my desire to revive the "classic" series, using modern technologies, for fans around the world who still love the older games.

You worked on Sonic the Hedgehog 3 and Sonic & Knuckles. Is anyone else who worked on the Sega Genesis games contributing to Sonic 4?

Among the staff for Sonic 4, only Jun Senoue and myself worked on the Sonic series at that time. Senoue composed some of the music in Sonic the Hedgehog 3 and Sonic & Knuckles. For Sonic 4, he is in charge of creating all music and sound effects as the sound director.

What are some of the core elements that you knew had to be included in Sonic 4?

The moment they start playing the game, users should recognize that this is a new title in the "classic" series. I think we've succeeded with that through elements like the world designs, the music, and simple actions that can be performed with a single button press. As soon as they touch it, players will know that this is part of the "classic" series.

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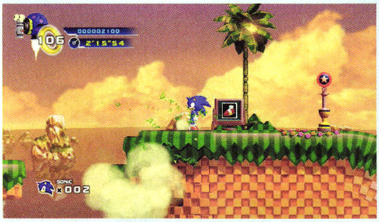
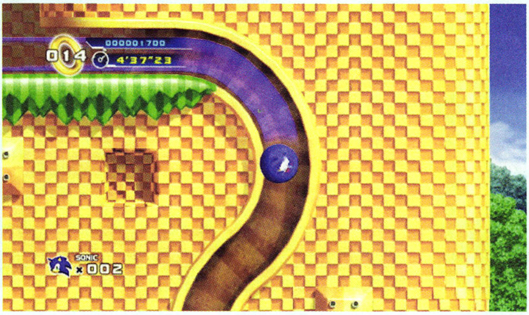
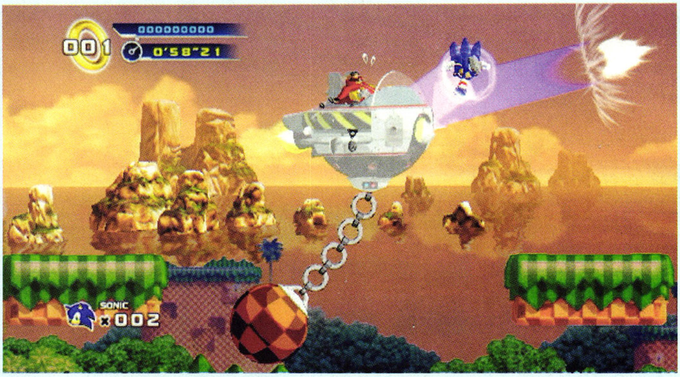
Many longtime fans have noted that the Genesis games placed a greater emphasis on platforming and momentum-based gameplay than have recent installments. Was returning to that a priority for Sonic 4?

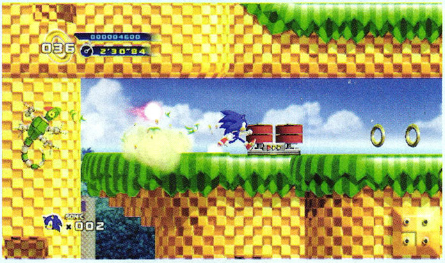
Of course. Because the gameplay follows the "classic" series, compared with the 3-D games in which Sonic runs at furious speeds in 3-D stages, it naturally becomes more of a platforming game.



Continuing one of the series's more-bizarre traditions, power-ups appear inside computer monitors. Please note: destroying your home PC will not make you temporarily invincible.







What new elements have you introduced for Sonic 4? How did you decide whether an addition felt right for a classic-style Sonic game?
Most of the actions are based on the "classic" series, but this title also adopts the homing attack, which has been a regular inclusion since Sonic Adventure. I wanted to add that excitement of performing continuous attacks, and it adds to the classic-style gameplay by providing a new means to discover routes in the sky.

Why did you choose this particular visual style over polygonal backgrounds, for instance?
The biggest reason is that because Sonic 4 is a new title in the "classic" series, I wanted to clearly differentiate it from the 3-D Sonic series. In addition, I want to have players rediscover the merits of 2-D graphics made by traditional techniques in an age where we have a flood of games with complex 3-D graphics. It's difficult to sell this 2-D visual style as a packaged product. Our plan has been realized because, with a download-exclusive title, we can offer a relatively reasonable price.

I also want to point out that even though it's a 2-D title, the quality of the graphics is high enough to enjoy even on a big-screen TV because we used the finest CG prerendering graphic techniques.

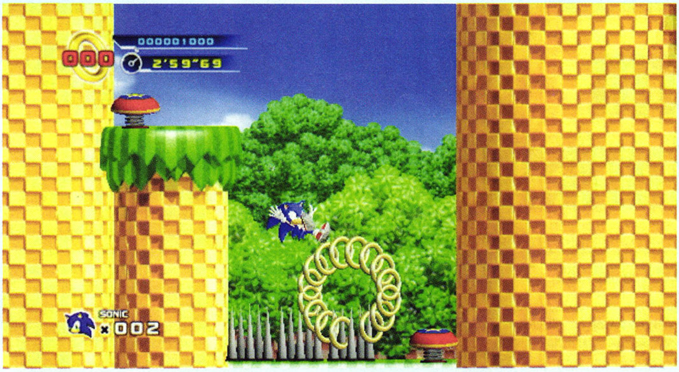
Why was it important to have Sonic as the only playable character?
We want to keep it simple with this episode, focusing only on the franchise's two biggest characters—Sonic versus his old rival, Dr. Eggman—so that both old fans who haven't played a Sonic title since the Genesis days and new fans who are playing Sonic for the first time can enjoy it. I'd say this title will be the best one for players who feel they cannot keep up with the recent Sonic titles.

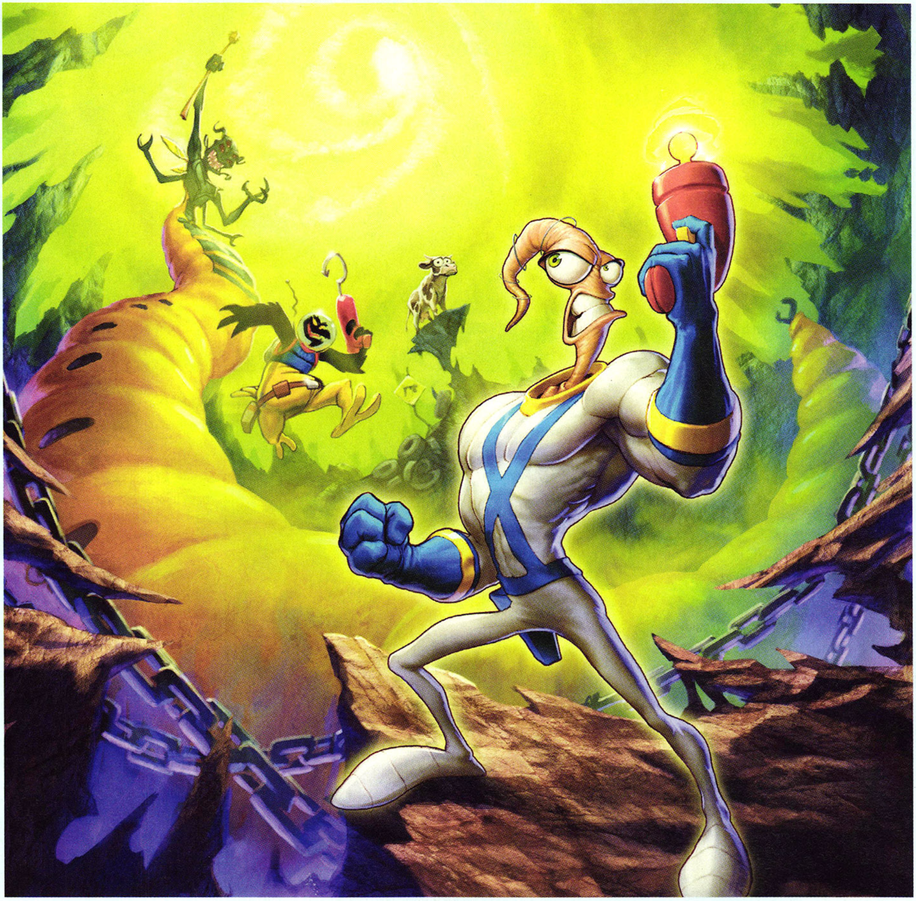
With so many other retro elements included, why not bring back Sonic's original pot-bellied character design?
That's because Sonic 4 is a brand-new title and not a remake. As you may know, all Sonic character designs were changed in 1998, so since then, all new titles have those new designs.

Will Tails or Knuckles make an appearance as a nonplayable character?
As I mentioned before, only Sonic and Dr. Eggman will be introduced in this episode (aside from the enemy robots and animals, of course). You'll have to wait and see what happens next as the Sonic the Hedgehog 4 saga progresses.

Which of the Sonic games for the Genesis is your favorite, and has that influenced your approach to Sonic 4 at all?
I personally like Sonic 2 best. Many elements from that game—level designs that enable the user to play smoothly, beautiful graphics, stage variety, etc.—were huge influences when I took part in the level design for Sonic 3. For Sonic the Hedgehog 4, I'm not directly involved in the level design, but I asked the team to include the best elements of Sonic 2.

Have you determined how many more episodes there will be? Will they comprise one continuous saga or will each episode be its own self-contained adventure? And will later episodes introduce any new gameplay elements beyond the first?
I'm sorry, but I can't go into those details yet. But I can let you know that we named this title Episode I because we want it to consist of various installments similar to the way Sonic 3 finishes its story with Sonic & Knuckles. This title is not putting as much emphasis on the story as recent Sonic games, of course, but I bet you will enjoy completing this episode in and of itself, as well as the cliffhanger at the end.



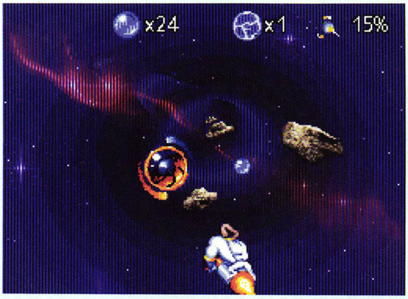


The Worm Has Returned

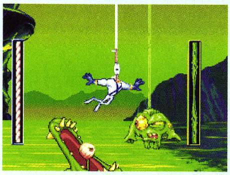
The DSiWare lineup gets a boost of protein with a remake of the 16-bit classic **Earthworm Jim**.

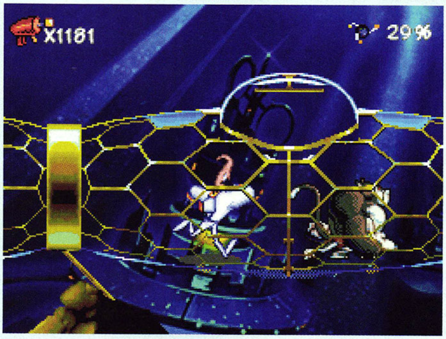
ONE OF THE truly great heroes in video game history, Earthworm Jim has been missing in action for far too long. Fortunately, that will change in just a few short weeks as our favorite princess-saving, spacesuit-wearing, bovine-abusing annelid comes to DSiWare with an updated version of his original action-platforming masterpiece. Groovy!

First released for the Sega Genesis and Super NES in 1994, Earthworm Jim was created by Eisner Award-wining artist Doug TenNapel and Shiny Entertainment, one of North America's premiere development studios in the 16-bit era. The game was a massive critical and commercial success, thanks in no small part to a bizarre and inspired sense of humor. Jim could use his own head as a whip, occasionally rode around on giant hamsters, and confronted such memorable bosses as Professor Monkey-for-a-Head and Bob the Killer Goldfish, the latter of whom our hero could vanquish simply by knocking his bowl off a table. A diverse collection of unique stages offered plenty of gameplay variety, and tons of hidden secrets encouraged repeated playthroughs. The game's presentation delighted, as well. TenNapel's brilliant art direction was brought to life with painstakingly detailed animation, and Tommy Tallarico (the subject of this month's Power Profiles) composed a wonderfully quirky soundtrack that tied everything together. Our favorite musical flourish: when the score for a level set in hell starts with the foreboding classic piece "Night on Bald Mountain" before cutting



[Above] Pseudo-3-D special stages pit you in a race against Psy-Crow.





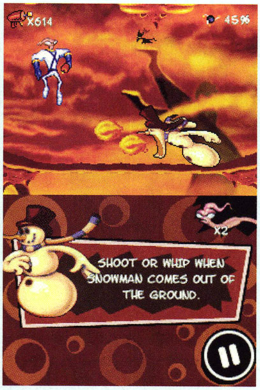
to awesomely bad elevator music accompanied by tortured screams.

The DSiWare update is being handled by publisher/developer Gameloft, whose biggest priority was to avoid messing too much with a classic. "Earthworm Jim made such an impact on an entire generation of gamers that we have to be careful not to disappoint them," says product manager Anne-Joelle Casenaz. "The quality of the original—the core of the game, the gameplay, the level design—was so phenomenal that it still makes for a great action-platformer, even today. This is why we kept those aspects and just remastered the graphics, the music and sound, and the difficulty to adapt them to today's standards." As those familiar with the 16-bit original can tell from the screenshots here, Gameloft hasn't altered the overall aesthetic, but the DSiWare game features a brighter color palette and redrawn sprites, essentially giving it a bit of a facelift (which, in our opinion, looks a lot better than the ugly 3-D port for PSP that was cancelled a few years ago). The company has taken the same approach with the music, improving the sound quality and remixing certain parts while always retaining the flavor of Tallarico's original compositions.

As Casenaz mentioned, Gameloft also addressed the game's difficulty. A new Easy mode reduces the amount of damage Jim takes, slows down certain enemies, and offers hints on the bottom screen of the Nintendo DSi handheld. "The idea was to allow everyone to finish the game without altering it too much," she explains. "The original was so challenging that most players were never able to finish it." Before hardcore Jim fans start gathering the pitchforks, we'll point out that an Original mode is also included and offers the exact same level of difficulty as the 1994 cartridge.

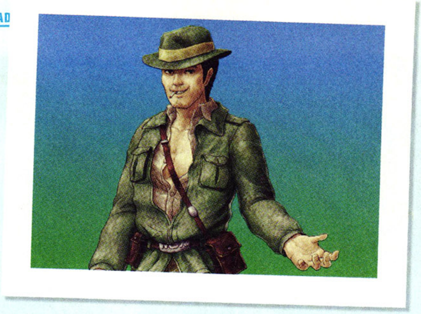
Another addition to this DSiWare update involves the handheld's built-in camera. At certain points in the game, you can earn bonuses by mimicking Jim's facial expression as the two of you pose together on the bottom screen. It's a neat touch, and as Casenaz puts it, "Encouraging players to make faces in front of the camera fits perfectly with the tone of the game."

So if this release proves a success, could there be more earthworm-y goodness in our future? Casenaz tells us, "We're still discussing the issue with [license-owner] Interplay, but I think remaking Earthworm Jim 2 or creating a brand-new game in the franchise would be great! If players love this game and if we can give them more Earthworm Jim, we'll start on it as soon as possible. All that's left is for the players to decide." —**STEVE T.**



SHOOT OR WHIP WHEN SNOWMAN COMES OUT OF THE GROUND.

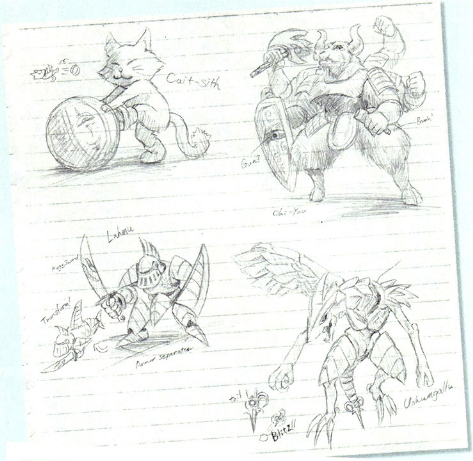
[Above] If earthworms could dream, we imagine it'd look a lot like this. [Right] We don't know what Frosty did to get himself sent to hell, but he's apparently gained the ability to belch fireballs.

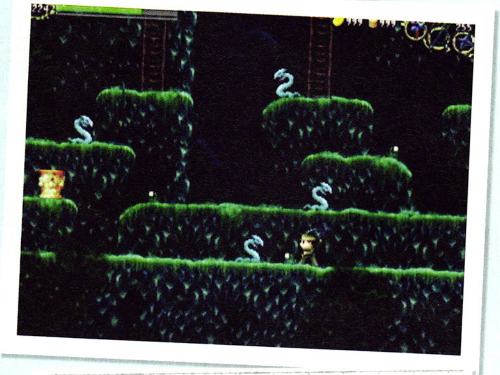


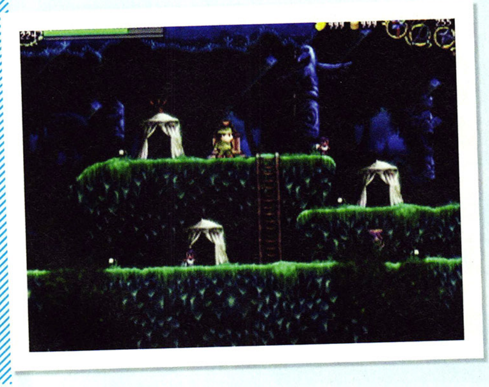
Land of the Lost

We embark on a one-man expedition into the depths of **La-Mulana**. Intrepid WiiWare adventurers, prepare yourselves....

IF YOU'VE EVER wanted to explore ancient ruins and discover the secrets of lost civilizations—and don't mind overcoming a lot of danger to do so— then upcoming WiiWare game La-Mulana is for you. Featuring a nonlinear Metroid-style game structure and a whip-wielding, Indiana Jones-inspired hero, the game is packed with fierce creatures, devious puzzles, and hazardous challenges at every turn. Only by using a variety of weapons (including a chain whip, an axe, grenades, shuriken, throwing knives, a flare gun, and a pistol) and acquiring a plethora of helpful items (such as a scanning device, a waterproof helmet, and a climbing claw) will protagonist Lemeza Kosugi be able to overcome the titular ruins of La-Mulana and find his missing father. Here's what our intrepid explorer encountered as he ventured into the unknown. **—CHRIS H.**







JOURNAL ENTRY #1: THE SURFACE

My journey began in a small village. Even at night, there are villagers running around, including small children. Are they oblivious to the danger nearby or do they not care? The village consists of little more than a few tents, but they have some interesting stuff for sale. This might come in handy later when I get some cash. There are lots of predatory birds and snakes around. It's funny—I've heard of some archaeologist who's scared to death of snakes. I don't think he'd do too well out here.

I tried going west from the village and encountered a gigantic, blue-skinned ogre. I don't know how I'm going to get past him, but I know I can't do it now. Instead, I went to the east and climbed up a series of cliffs and ladders. The village is a long way down! Far to the east there's a waterfall, but I'm not in the mood to get wet. Closer to the village, though, I discovered a cave—the entrance to the legendary La-Mulana ruins. As I made my way through the darkness, I noticed some unusual designs on the wall. I wonder if they have any significant meaning.

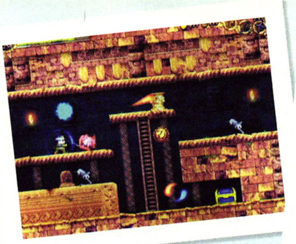
JOURNAL ENTRY #2: GUIDANCE GATE

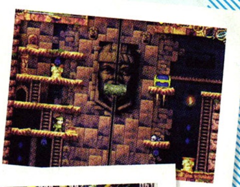
Inside the ruins proper, I was greeted by a giant stone face on the wall. The stonework is impressive. I also encountered some very aggressive bats and—believe it or not—skeletons that have somehow come to life! There are nasty-looking spikes all over the place, too. I'll have to be careful.

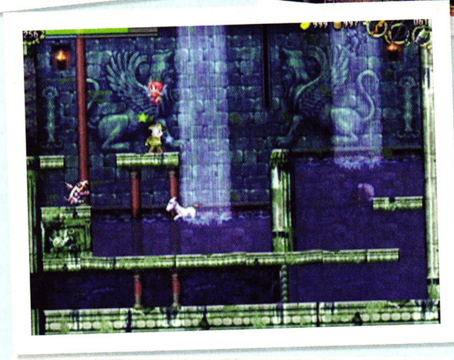
I found a hefty treasure chest, but couldn't pry it open. When I stepped on a raised floor panel nearby, however, the chest unlocked. I have a feeling that this is but the first of many riddles. Inside the chest was a blue jewel that increased and restored my stamina. Very handy.

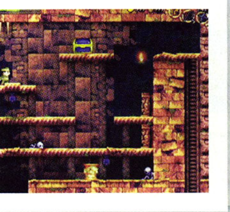
A bit deeper into the ruins I touched an emblem on the wall, and it revealed a passage up above me that was full of skeletons. I'm gonna go on record and say that can't be good. Even worse, however, was the creepy eye on the wall. I heard that if I make the wrong move in its presence, it'll blast me with lightning. That'd end my trip in a hurry.

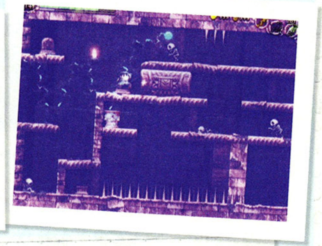
I think I'm starting to get a feel for this place. There are pedestals all over, and when I put offerings on them it triggers some mechanism. One of the pedestals unlocked a treasure chest containing a map. But another one made a statue collapse! It almost crushed me. And that's only the tip of the iceberg. By smashing a stone panel I was able to activate an ancient elevator, and I even found a path so well concealed that it was virtually invisible. There are false spikes, too; some sort of illusion to keep people away from the shuriken I found, I suppose.

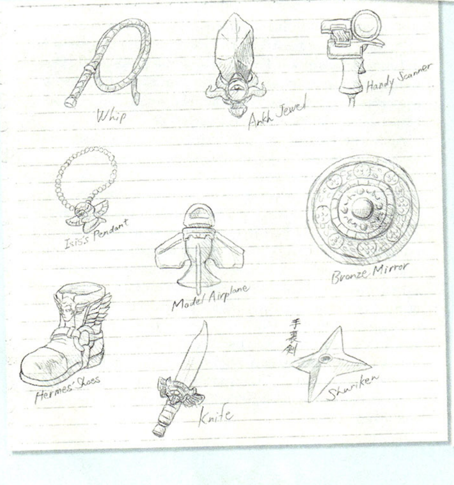










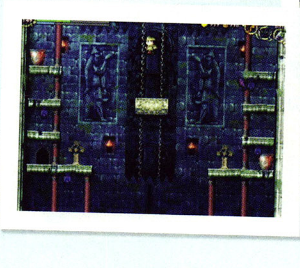


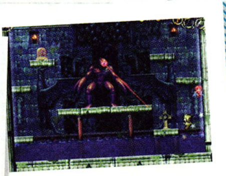
JOURNAL ENTRY #3: SKY WATER SOURCE

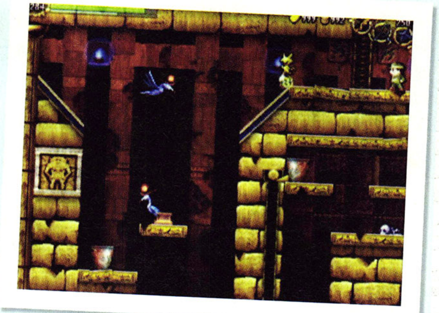
The aquatic temple I've found myself in is amazing. Who would have thought that something like this could exist underground? There are pools everywhere, and waterfalls pouring down the mossy walls. Of course, there are vicious creatures here, too. As I was marveling at a fish swimming up a waterfall, it actually jumped out and attacked me! I lost my footing and slipped into the water. It's a small miracle I didn't drown.

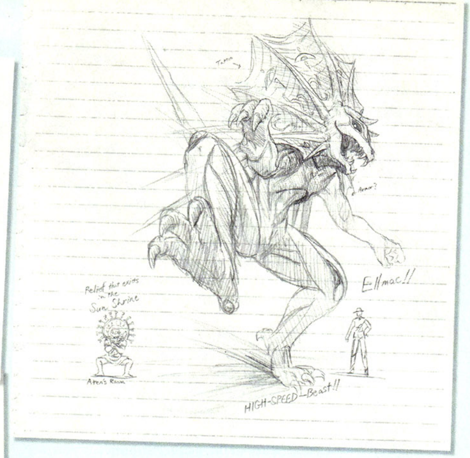
A large body of water is preventing me from getting any further. Guess I'll have to go for another swim.

I could feel my lungs burning—it was almost like my health was going down the longer I stayed in the water—and the pool was full of deadly jellyfish, but somehow I made it to the other side. What I encountered there was unbelievable: a room full of gears and machinery! Who would have imagined the ancient people had such technology? The gears controlled a series of elevators, which took me up to a room guarded by a giant creature! I was able to make short work of it with those shuriken I picked up earlier. After I defeated the monster, I was able to get a mystical orb that let me breathe underwater, as well as a glove that increased my reaction speed. I never would have believed it if I hadn't experienced it myself.





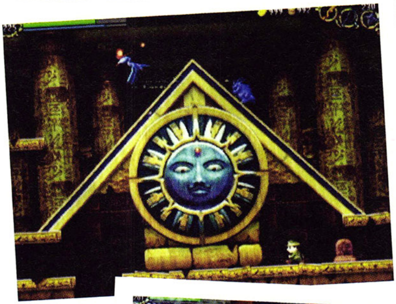


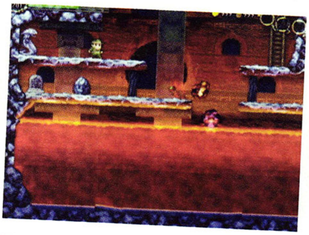

Relief that exits in the Sun Shrine
Aten's Room
Armor?
Ellmac!!
HIGH-SPEED—Beast!!

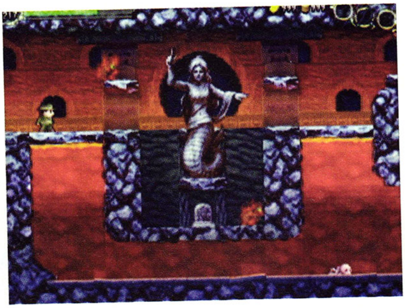
JOURNAL ENTRY #4: SUN SHRINE

The deeper I get into La-Mulana, the more I wonder just who created it. At first I thought it could have been Incans, but the area called the Sun Shrine is very similar to ancient Egyptian pyramids. The walls are lined with sarcophagi, and inclines of moving sand make it hard to traverse the terrain. There are more weird creatures here, too: birds that emit fire, and, strangely enough, cats balancing on balls.

I slipped on one of the sandy inclines and fell into a pit. It was a rough landing. But that wasn't the half of it. I couldn't find any way out! I tried negotiating a series of passages, but the door at the end was shut tight. I thought that my journey was finished, but by whipping a switch on the wall, I knocked some sort of peculiar light source into the pit. The light illuminated some platforms that I couldn't see before, and I used them to make my way out. But what I found next was even more problematic—a massive lizard that could curl itself up and spin around the chamber, using the frills on its neck as a weapon! That was a tough battle.





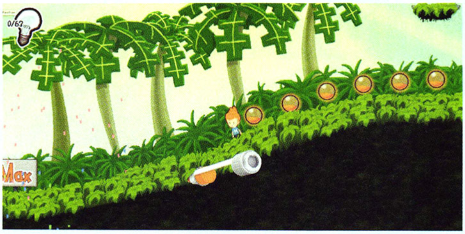


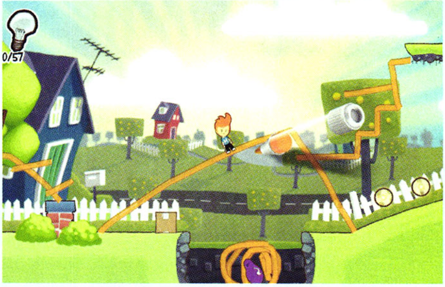
JOURNAL ENTRY #5: BURNING CAVERN

As I exited the Sun Shrine and entered a cave, I felt the temperature rising. Pretty soon it became obvious why—the caverns were full of giant pools of lava. I could see skeletons in the lava; I didn't want to end up the same way. I had to leap from one stone block to another to cross the first lava pit, and I had to do it quickly. Those blocks started sinking as soon as I touched 'em.

Amidst the lava floes, I found a weird statue that was half woman, half snake. Was it something the ancient people worshipped? I'll worry about it later. For now I'd better concern myself with not becoming a crispy critter. Bursts of flame keep erupting from the cave walls and floors, and burning rocks shot from the lava pits as I leapt over them. Some of the rocks even crumbled away beneath my feet. I think I melted part of my boot. And if that weren't trouble enough, there are more reanimated skeleton monsters here, too. They're harder to destroy than the ones I fought earlier, and they've been tossing bones at me.

Deep within the lava-filled cave I discovered a cloak that was cold to the touch. It almost seemed like magic. I know this sounds nuts, but with this thing on, I could probably dive into the lava and not even get hurt. Any way you look at it, this adventure just keeps getting crazier, and I get the feeling that it's not going to end anytime soon....





The Missing Ink

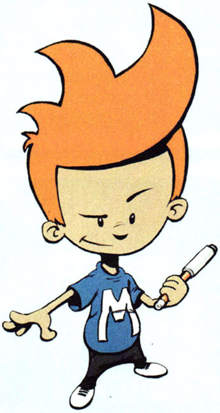
Art meets adventure in **Max & the Magic Marker**, one of WiiWare's most exciting original titles.

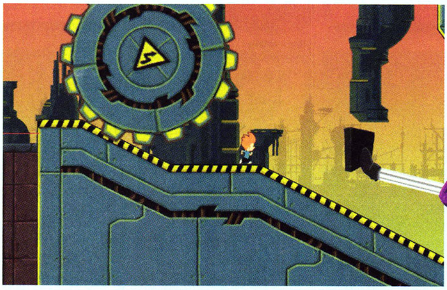
MAKING ITS MARK on the drawing-and-platforming subgenre, Max & the Magic Marker has you coming to the aid of little guy Max as he goes in search of a monster that he brought to life with a mysterious orange marker.

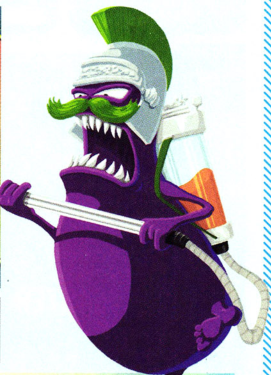
The objects that you draw by pointing and swiping with the Wii Remote controller have a realistic, physical presence in the game world. Draw a horizontal line in the air, and it will drop into place something like a wood plank, possibly becoming a bridge or a ramp, which Max can use to continue his quest. A seesaw and a scribbled rock on one end will catapult Max up the sheer side of a cliff, or a set of stairs will let him advance upward with more precision. The solutions to most of the puzzles are rooted in your observation of the environment. When Max stops at a place where balloons are rising in a steady stream, for example, that's your cue to create a box that holds him and enough balloons to lift him to the next challenge. A large rock on a floating platform is an invitation to create a lever that starts the rock rolling and crashing through obstacles. There are multiple ways to attack most situations, limited only by your imagination and the ink supply. Luckily, collectible, floating ink blobs are there for the taking and their locations help point Max's way to the villain, Mustacho.

Three worlds with picture-book flair contain a total of 15 levels, each chock-full of puzzles. Published by Press Play, the game is already out in Europe and, by the time you read this, it may have reached North America.

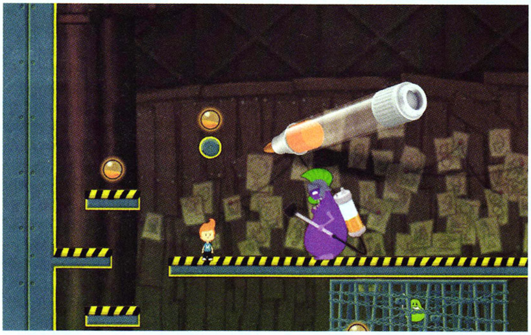
—GEORGE S.

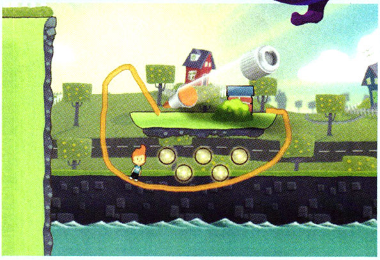






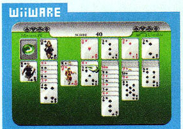
In this game, the pen is definitely mightier than the sword.





EVALUATION STATION

WiiWARE



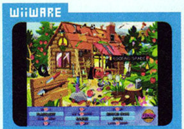
5 IN 1 SOLITAIRE

PUBLISHER: **DIGITAL LEISURE**
GENRE: **CARD**
Wii POINTS: **500**

Predictably, 5 in 1 Solitaire offers five flavors of respite to the lonely: Klondike, FreeCell, Spider, Golf, and Gaps. What it lacks in looks (the game is clearly more at home on the DSi), it makes up for in features: a reliable, fair game engine; effective tutorials for newcomers; legitimate difficulty tweaks (that don't rely on rigged dealing); an autoplay feature that minimizes card-dragging busy work; and (most importantly) the ability to save in-progress games. —PATRICK C.

Recommended

WiiWARE



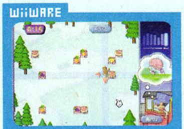
"AHA! I FOUND IT!" HIDDEN OBJECT GAME

PUBLISHER: **ATEAM**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
Wii POINTS: **500**

Regardless of how keen your powers of observation are, you'll have a tough time finding items in this hidden-item puzzle game. Unlike most games of this type, which rely on crisp, clear visuals, this one uses a cartoony, limited color palette that causes visual chaos and makes it hard to see the objects you're looking for. Maybe the developers thought this was clever, but all it really amounts to is eye strain. —CHRIS H.

Grumble Grumble

WiiWARE



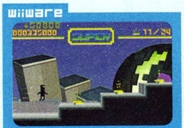
THE AMAZING BRAIN TRAIN!

PUBLISHER: **NINJABEE**
GENRE: **BRAIN TRAINING**
Wii POINTS: **600**

Brain-training games are as common as deficient brains, but they often fail to enthrall players. The Amazing Brain Train's solution? Some much-needed context; the better players perform, the farther their brain-powered train moves along its tracks. Animals at various destinations provide simple quests to justify all the locomotion. The assortment of minigames is limited, but that doesn't derail this unique twist on brain training. —PATRICK C.

Recommended

WiiWARE



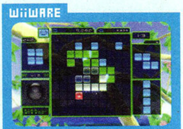
BIT.TRIP RUNNER

PUBLISHER: **AKSYS GAMES**
GENRE: **ACTION**
Wii POINTS: **TBD**

On the one hand, Bit.Trip Runner's old-school-style aesthetics are charming, and its techno music fits perfectly. On the other hand, this platformer can be downright frustrating to play. As your character runs left to right automatically, you have to avoid an array of hazards. This requires that you employ a combination of reflexes, timing, precision, and memorization. Make just one misstep, and you're kicked back to the beginning of the level. —JUSTIN C.

Hmmm...

WiiWARE



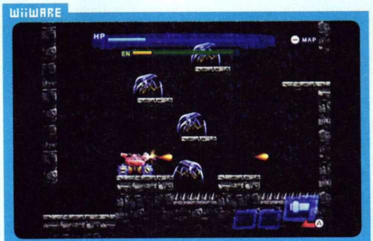
BITTOS+

PUBLISHER: **MACHINE**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
Wii POINTS: **800**

Tetris has more imitators than Slim Shady, most of them unremarkable and quite unneccesary. Bittos+ joins the parade with its smattering of bland Tetris tweaks; players snap the usual shapes onto a flat playing field to form clusters that disappear to clear space. Naturally, a slow pace invites obstructions that make the job tougher (it's laborious regardless). Uninspired and boring from the get-go, Bittos+ offers little more than bitter disappointment. —PATRICK C.

Grumble Grumble

WiiWARE



BLASTER MASTER OVERDRIVE

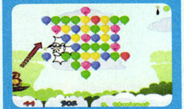
PUBLISHER: **SUNSOFT** GENRE: **ACTION** Wii POINTS: **1,000**

Phil T's Pick

This updated version of the NES classic features all-new levels, weapons, and enemies in addition to enhanced graphics and music, making it feel more like a sequel than a plain ol' remake. As before, exploring the large, Metroid-style world both on foot and in an upgradable tank is exciting and challenging. The addition of a map screen and multiple save points is extremely welcome and helps counter the fact that you have just one life. The only real downside is the lack of Classic Controller support or customizable controls—using the B Button to strafe while holding the Wii Remote sideways is awkward.

Recommended

WiiWARE



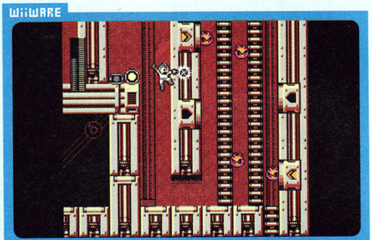
BLOONS

PUBLISHER: **HANDS-ON MOBILE**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
Wii POINTS: **500**

In Bloons, you control a monkey who pops as many balloons as possible by throwing darts. This premise might make the game sound at least somewhat interesting, but don't be fooled: Bloons is boring. And the game doesn't take advantage of any of the Wii Remote's features other than throwing darts by shaking the controller (or simply by tapping B). It's puzzling that Bloons doesn't use the pointer, opting for Control Pad-centric gameplay instead. —JUSTIN C.

Grumble Grumble

WiiWARE



MEGA MAN 10

PUBLISHER: **CAPCOM** GENRE: **ACTION** Wii POINTS: **1,000**

Chris H's Pick

As fans have come to expect, Mega Man 10 delivers exactly the elements that have made the series so successful: precise control; catchy 8-bit tunes; appealing retro visuals; cool weapons; rock-hard gameplay; and fun, well-designed levels. But there are also new surprises and challenges around every corner, from conveyor-belt-powered platforms and destructible ice blocks to seesawlike transportation devices and blinding sandstorms. Nods to past Mega Man games—including cameos by several classic bosses—are especially cool. The normal difficulty is more fair than that of Mega Man 9, and the new Easy mode provides a low-stress yet thoroughly enjoyable Mega Man experience.

Recommended

WiiWARE

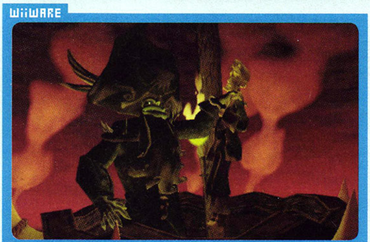
HUBERT THE TEDDY BEAR WINTER GAMES

PUBLISHER: **TEYON**
GENRE: **SPORTS**
Wii POINTS: **500**

Don't be fooled by the title: this is a long-overdue Christmas game desperate for an alternate theme. (Look! The Olympics!) So if you're looking for teddy-bear ice dancing you're nuzzling the wrong rotten log. If, however, you're looking for a series of awful Xmas-themed minigames, complete with hollow goals, abysmal controls, and miserable animations, you're in luck: it's Christmas time again. **—PATRICK C.**

Grumble Grumble

WiiWARE



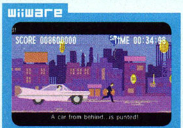
TALES OF MONKEY ISLAND CHAPTER 5: RISE OF THE PIRATE GOD

PUBLISHER: **TELLTALE** GENRE: **ADVENTURE** Wii POINTS: **1,000**

Considering the quality of the majority of the Tales of Monkey Island episodes, I had pretty high hopes for the grand finale, Rise of the Pirate God. Though the game isn't as epic as I'd anticipated, it still delivers a fine adventure with clever puzzles (the new take on insult swordfighting is especially fun), smart dialogue, and a great story that gives all of the characters a chance to shine, topped off with a fairly satisfying resolution. Unfortunately, a few glitches rear their ugly heads near the end of the game, and though they don't ruin the experience, they do detract from it. **—CHRIS H.**

Recommended

WiiWARE



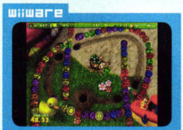
TOMENA SANNER

PUBLISHER: **KONAMI**
GENRE: **ALTERNATIVE**
Wii POINTS: **500**

Quite possibly the strangest WiiWare offering yet (and that's saying something), Tomena Sanner is essentially the salary-man version of the movie *Falling Down.* As our business-suited hero sprints through various locales, pressing the A Button at the right moment will make him deal with any obstacle in his path. That could mean drop-kicking a car into the stratosphere, breakdancing with a robot, or sucker-punching a dude in the groin. It's simple yet hilarious fun. **—STEVE T.**

Recommended

WiiWARE



TUMBLEBUGS 2

PUBLISHER: **GAMESHASTRA**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
Wii POINTS: **800**

Don't worry about having missed out on the first Tumblebugs—all you need to know is that Tumblebugs 2 is essentially Magnetica Twist with an insect-centric story and presentation. The gameplay in both titles is pretty much identical: you eliminate all of the differently colored balls on the play field by shooting orbs and matching at least three spheres of the same color. Fortunately, the power-ups, as well as the solid pointer controls, help make this task easier. **—JUSTIN C.**

Hmmm...

WiiWARE

UNO

PUBLISHER: **GAMELOFT**
GENRE: **CARD**
Wii POINTS: **1,000**

This version of the classic card game retains the original's simple, addictive gameplay, but it has its faults. As one might expect, the single-player mode is relatively bland—the real fun is had in multiplayer. However, in local matches players must quickly look away to avoid seeing each other's cards, making it useless, and the online mode suffers from a poorly implemented messaging system when you're not using WiiSpeak with your friends. **—PHIL T.**

Hmmm...

VIRTUAL CONSOLE

ALEX KIDD IN SHINOBI WORLD

PLATFORM: **MASTER SYSTEM**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
GENRE: **ACTION**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1990**

Essentially a parody of Shinobi, this cartoony platformer respectably melds Sega's once-popular ninja series with the company's former mascot. The cute jump-and-attack gameplay is pretty straightforward (a pole-spinning move is the only noteworthy play mechanic), but it's fairly fun—at least until the later levels, when the slippery controls and lack of continues become an issue. **—CHRIS H.**

Hmmm...

VIRTUAL CONSOLE

GHOUL PATROL

PLATFORM: **SUPER NES**
PUBLISHER: **LUCASARTS/JVC**
GENRE: **ACTION**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1994**

This sequel to the cult classic Zombies Ate My Neighbors is one of those games that tries to recapture the magic of its predecessor, but, sadly, comes up short. Although the core gameplay is mostly the same, it lacks the charm and humor of the original. Some new moves don't make up for the severe lack of stages (which aren't nearly as fun to navigate as those in ZAMN) and the dull weapon selection. It's not bad, but it can't top the first game. **—PHIL T.**

Hmmm...

VIRTUAL CONSOLE

MOVE
LOOK
CHECK
TALK
TAKE
USE
GIVE
BUY
HIT
FIGHT
PRAISE
DUMP
ITEM
PERCY

"Minister Pumpkin's Farmies will destroy all us vegetables.
We must stop him!"

PRINCESS TOMATO IN THE SALAD KINGDOM

PLATFORM: **NES**
PUBLISHER: **HUDSON**
GENRE: **ADVENTURE**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1991**

It may not surprise you to hear that Princess Tomato is a rather silly game, but you might be surprised to learn that it's actually pretty good. This simplistic graphic-adventure may have some odd quirks (do we really need "check" *and* "look" commands?), but the charming story and goofy sense of humor make up for it. It's also a fun way to introduce youngsters to this overlooked genre. **—PHIL T.**

Recommended

VIRTUAL CONSOLE

SHADOW DANCER: THE SECRET OF SHINOBI

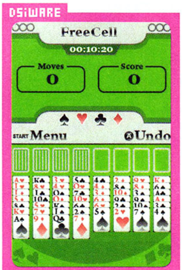
PLATFORM: **SEGA GENESIS**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
GENRE: **ACTION**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1991**

Although I think The Revenge of Shinobi is a better game, Shadow Dancer is the more authentic Shinobi sequel—same hostage-rescuing premise, same one-hit deaths. Skillful enemy placement will keep you on your toes, and the ability to sic your attack dog on foes adds a unique twist (even if it is underutilized). The game looks good, too, and the funky tunes hold up well. **—CHRIS H.**

Recommended

EVALUATION STATION

DSiWARE



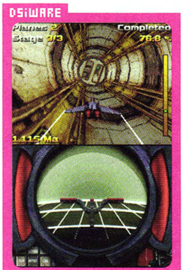
5 IN 1 SOLITAIRE

PUBLISHER: **DIGITAL LEISURE**
GENRE: **CARD**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **200**

A near-exact duplicate of the WiiWare game, the DSiWare version has several advantages (in addition to portability): the smaller screen increases the game's apparent visual fidelity, the stylus beats the Wii Remote at card dragging, and this one costs less than half as much! —**PATRICK C.**

Recommended

DSiWARE



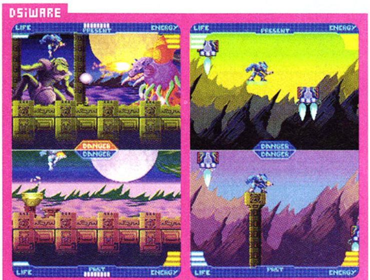
AIRACE: TUNNEL

PUBLISHER: **QUBIC GAMES**
GENRE: **RACING**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **200**

Ostensibly, AiRace: Tunnel pits players against a tube filled with rotating traps; contenders pass through said traps while flying an increasingly speedy jet. In actuality, awkward controls, dicey perspective, and a foreboding sense of having been ripped off are the real enemies. —**PATRICK C.**

Grumble Grumble

DSiWARE



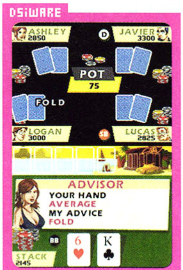
CHRONOS TWINS

PUBLISHER: **ENJOYUP** GENRE: **ACTION** NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

In our last issue, the reviewer of the WiiWare version of Chronos Twins stated that without its temporal gimmick the game wouldn't be anything special. But what's important is that Chronos Twins *does* have that gimmick, and it's absolutely brilliant. You control one character in two time periods simultaneously (one on each screen), with different obstacle and enemy placement in each period. Coordinating your moves between the two screens is uniquely challenging but very satisfying, and it allows for some frantic action and clever puzzles. Additionally, an improved presentation makes this version better than its WiiWare counterpart. —**CHRIS H.**

Recommended

DSiWARE



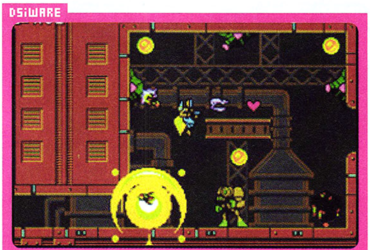
DOWNTOWN TEXAS HOLD'EM

PUBLISHER: **ELECTRONIC ARTS**
GENRE: **CARD**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

EA deals a polished interface and snappy pace, but the real aces here are hand-by-hand advice to assist newcomers, a genuine sense of progression (holdings carry over as tougher games/venues are unlocked), and wireless multiplayer. —**PATRICK C.**

Recommended

DSiWARE



DARK VOID ZERO

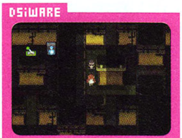
PUBLISHER: **CAPCOM** GENRE: **ACTION** NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

Phil T's Pick

Dark Void Zero begins with an image of an NES cartridge on the screen. To begin, you must blow into the DS's mic to "clean" the virtual cart. That sets the tone for the entire game. From the retro-style graphics and music to the hilarious (and completely made-up) history of the game, this is a loving tribute to Capcom's 8-bit era. Nostalgia aside, the game is actually quite good. The large, well-designed levels give you plenty to explore, there's a good variety of weapons, and the controls—whether you're walking or using your jetpack—are tight. The only real strike against the game is its short duration, but it's still challenging enough to make it worth your while.

Recommended

DSiWARE



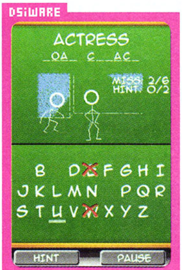
ESCAPEE GO!

PUBLISHER: **GEVO ENTERTAINMENT**
GENRE: **ACTION**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **200**

Imagine playing Pac-Man, only you can't see the whole level layout or even the ghosts until they're right in front of you. That's pretty much Escapee Go! in a nutshell. There are some neat power-ups to give you an edge, but running around blindly frequently leads to situations where you have no escape route, and it feels like there's nothing you could have done about it. Usually you have to just try again and hope for better luck. —**CHRIS H.**

Grumble Grumble

DSiWARE



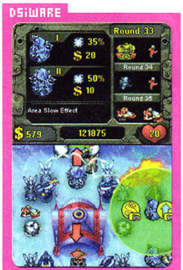
EXTREME HANGMAN

PUBLISHER: **GAMELION STUDIOS**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **200**

Hangman isn't the most dynamic game, but Gamelion takes a noble stab at tarting it up with stick figures in a variety of lethal predicaments. If you're not a hangman aficionado, you won't care, but fans of the gallows should find new life here. —**PATRICK C.**

Hmmm...

DSiWARE



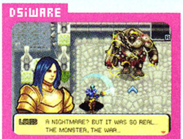
FIELDRUNNERS

PUBLISHER: **SUBATOMIC STUDIOS**
GENRE: **STRATEGY**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

Fieldrunners is RTS lite with one goal: protect your base by dragging and dropping towers while enemies attack in single file. There are long moments of watching and waiting, and strategy is one-note. Still, play control is issue-free and the levels are long and challenging. —**GEORGE S.**

Hmmm...

DSiWARE


LOUIS A NIGHTMARE? BUT IT WAS SO REAL... THE MONSTER, THE WAR...

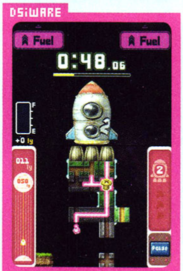
LEGENDS OF EXIDIA

PUBLISHER: GAMELOFT
GENRE: RPG
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: 800

The prospect of a full-fledged role-playing game on DSiWare is an exciting one—what RPG fan wouldn't be thrilled about downloading a beefy and engaging title? Unfortunately, Legends of Exidia is neither of these things. You can finish the game in an afternoon, and this action-RPG still has an ultimately forgettable story. The gameplay is fun enough for a while (when you're not level-grinding, anyway), but the controls feel a bit too loose overall. —**JUSTIN C.**

Hmmm...

DSiWARE



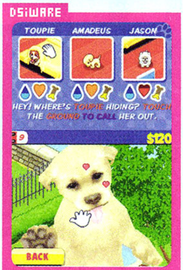
LINK 'N' LAUNCH

PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
GENRE: PUZZLE
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: 500

You don't have to be a rocket scientist to connect the power source and the ship in this tile-manipulating puzzler, but if you don't have a knack for spatial reconfiguration, the timer will seem to tick down very quickly. Clearly explained training exercises help immensely. —**GEORGE S.**

Hmmm...

DSiWARE



HEY! WHERE'S TOUPIE HIDING? TOUCH THE GROUND TO CALL HER OUT.

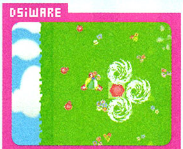
ME AND MY DOGS: FRIENDS FOREVER

PUBLISHER: GAMELOFT
GENRE: SIMULATION
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: 800

Play with, feed, and train up to three dogs of three breeds. Nintendogs owners will find Me and My Dogs to be redundant, but it does mimic the proto-pet sim artfully. The pace is faster, the control is looser, and the puppies are just as cute. —**GEORGE S.**

Recommended

DSiWARE



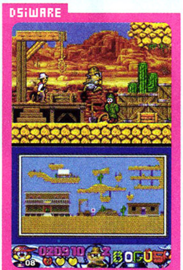
MOVE YOUR BRAIN ROLLWAY PUZZLE

PUBLISHER: ASSORIA
GENRE: PUZZLE
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: 500

The idea behind Rollway Puzzle is pretty darn clever. This Monkey Ball clone uses the Nintendo DSi's interior camera to detect when you're moving the handheld, thus simulating tilt control. Unfortunately, it doesn't work very well in practice. Simply getting the ball to move in the intended direction is a constant struggle, and the bland-looking level designs require far more precision than the mechanic is capable of. —**STEVE T.**

Grumble Grumble

DSiWARE



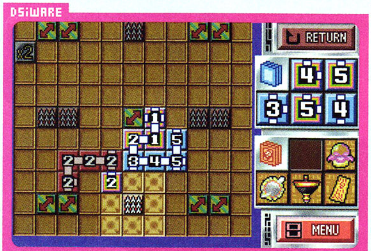
OSCAR IN MOVIELAND

PUBLISHER: VIRTUAL PLAYGROUND
GENRE: PLATFORMER
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: 800

Oscar in Toyland, released last year, provided generic gameplay, sloppy platforming, and haphazard level design. This follow-up offers more of the same. It looks good, but the collection-based action and lack of interesting play mechanics result in tedium. —**CHRIS H.**

Grumble Grumble

DSiWARE



NUMBER BATTLE

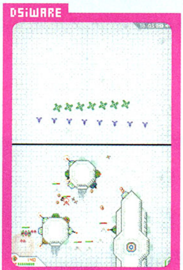
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO GENRE: PUZZLE NINTENDO DSi POINTS: 500

George S's Pick

Multiple types of connections, tiles, and items intimidate at first, but a thorough tutorial helps unlock the charms of this smart, four-player, tile-aligning puzzler. Built-in exercises in Puzzle mode help you develop strategies that you can take into Challenge mode. For the first few stages AI opponents are fairly forgiving, but the difficulty ramps up as you advance. A steady stream of new items and tile types also keeps things interesting. Some levels are expansive, forcing tiles to shrink to an almost-unreadable size to fit onscreen, but the added opportunities to connect numbered squares are worth the eye strain.

Recommended

DSiWARE



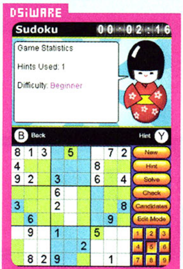
STARSHIP DEFENSE

PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
GENRE: STRATEGY
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: 500

Tower-defense games are well suited to handheld systems, and Starship Defense's slick design makes it a fun take on the popular (and addictive) genre. It also sports a solid number of levels, a wide variety of enemies and weapons, and a low price tag. —**PHIL T.**

Recommended

DSiWARE


Sudoku 00:02:16

Game Statistics
Hints Used: 1
Difficulty: Beginner

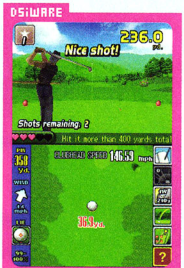
SUDOKU 4POCKETS

PUBLISHER: 4POCKETS.COM
GENRE: PUZZLE
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: 500

There are plenty of good DSiWare sudoku games out there, and that makes this titles's flaws all the more obvious. The game suffers from an awkward interface and a lack of structure, and though I appreciate the numerous help options, they arguably make the game too easy. —**CHRIS H.**

Grumble Grumble

DSiWARE



TRUE SWING GOLF EXPRESS

PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
GENRE: SPORTS
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: 800

There's no championship or direct competition in Nintendo's short version of its touch-triggered golfer, and only four courses. The control is as smooth as ever, though, and the graphics are sharp and clean. It's a reduced game at a reduced price. —**GEORGE S.**

Hmmm...

PREVIEWS

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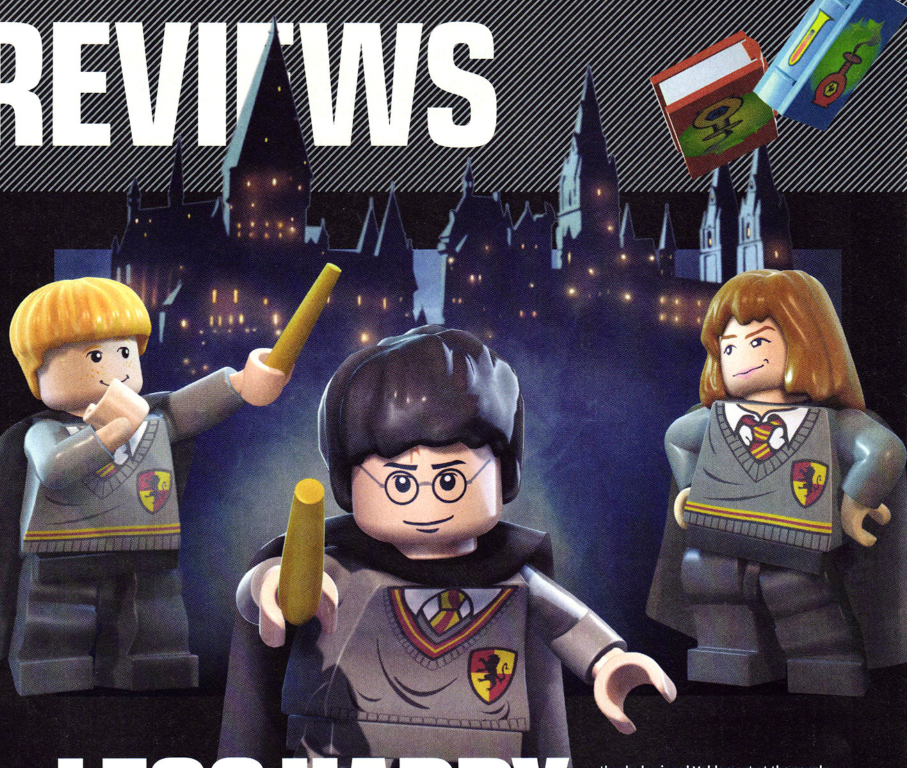


LEGO HARRY POTTER: YEARS 1–4

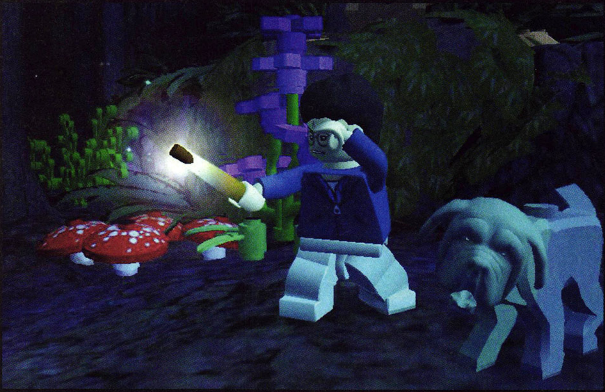
Raise your wand and shout, "A-brick-adabra!"

WHAT DO HARRY Potter, Darth Vader, Indiana Jones, and Batman have in common? If you said, "they all have visually distinctive noggins," well, you're right. However, with the upcoming release of LEGO Harry Potter: Years 1–4, this quartet of famous characters will have also starred in their own LEGO video games. Considering that there have been LEGO Harry Potter play sets for years now, this new game is long overdue.

As the title suggests, this adventure follows Harry's life from his first fateful meeting with Hagrid to his encounter with the dark wizard Voldemort at the conclusion of the Triwizard Tournament. Of course, seeing as how this is a LEGO game, the story will be told through a series of pantomimed cinema sequences injected with a healthy dose of humor. Although this new game shares many concepts and mechanics with previous LEGO titles, there are plenty of new features that not only incorporate aspects of J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter universe, but help to improve the overall gameplay as well.

The action starts shortly after Harry learns of his wizardly roots, and Hagrid whisks him off for a shopping spree in Diagon Alley. It is here where you have a chance to familiarize yourself with the basic controls, including building items out of LEGO bricks, collecting specific items to brew a potion, and swapping control between characters to take advantage of their individual skills. At this early stage, for example, Harry is unable to use magic (he doesn't have his wand yet, you see), and Hagrid can't climb on certain structures (they instantly crumble under the half-giant's weight).

Once you've gathered your school

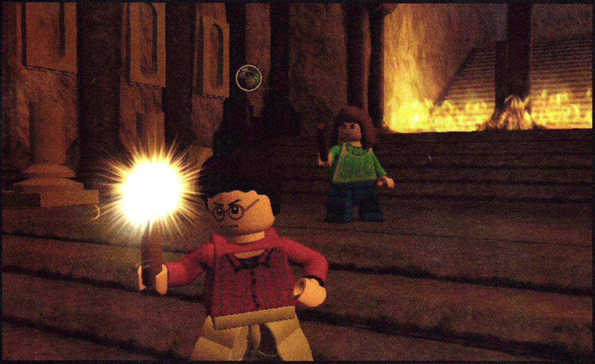


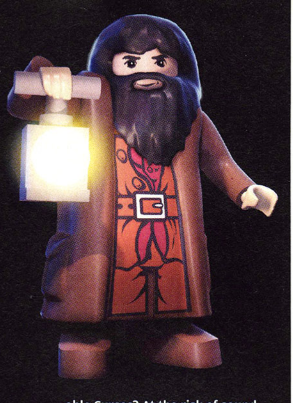
[Above] You'll need more than a lit wand and Fang the boarhound to survive the Forbidden Forest.

supplies, it's off to the heart of the game, Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. More than just a simple hub world that allows you to access other stages, Hogwarts is a massive environment filled with all sorts of places to explore and missions to accomplish. There are packages to be collected and delivered to the Owl Post, tokens to discover that unlock new characters, and house shields to earn, which reveal special Gold Brick bonus items. Certain areas of Hogwarts will trigger story events that act as regular stages.

During the course of the story, Harry and his friends attend classes where they learn new charms that can then be accessed at any time. By the end of the game, you'll have a library of spells at your disposal, including Wingardium Leviosa, Lumos, Transfiguration, and Immobulus. Aiming spells is a breeze thanks to the ability to use the Wii Remote controller like a wand. In addition to their spells, certain characters will have the ability to use special items and powers. Harry, for instance, has his Invisibility Cloak and can speak to snakes with his mastery of the Parseltongue language, while Hermione has the use of her Time-Turner.

A humorous example of the differing characters' skills comes during the first flying lesson when Harry, Ron, and Hermione need to retrieve Neville Longbottom's Remembrall, which has been stolen by Draco Malfoy. Harry, being a natural flier, is quick and easy to control. Ron moves a bit slower than Harry, but the real fun comes from watching Hermione. She may excel in her classes, but it's a hoot watching Hermione fight to stay on her broom as it jerks around all over the place. Needless to say, you'll probably want to play as Harry during this level.





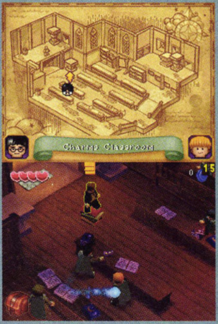
The further you get in the story, the more spells you'll learn, allowing you to access more and more of Hogwarts. Some of the later stages include battling a troll in the girls' restroom, discovering who is killing unicorns in the Forbidden Forest, uncovering Ginny Weasley's hiding place in the Burrow, and taking a winter trip through the village of Hogsmeade. There are even places to explore that have never appeared in the films. This game marks the first time that we'll get to see the Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw common rooms and how they are accessed. Levels can be replayed in Free mode, where you can brew a Polyjuice Potion to change into any character you've unlocked.

Just like in the previous LEGO games, things are more fun if you bring a friend along. At any point during the game, a second player can join in and take control of another character. If the two players happen to wander away from each other, the game automatically switches to a split-screen mode, so everyone is free to explore wherever they'd like. Once all of the secret characters have been unlocked, there will be 140 members of the Harry Potter universe to play as, so there shouldn't be any problem finding a witch or wizard (or half-giant or elf or dog, etc.) that's right for you. You'll even get to play as some of the story's villains. Although we've been told that the bad guy's powers are still a secret, we've been assured that everyone "remains true to their character." Does that mean we'll be able to cast some Unforgivable Curses? At the risk of sounding evil, we hope so.

The previous LEGO games have all been great fun, and the magical world of Harry Potter is a perfect fit for the creative and lighthearted LEGO treatment. Further, the expanded Hogwarts environment seems to tie the entire game together, making it feel like one large adventure instead of a series of unconnected stages. —PHIL T.

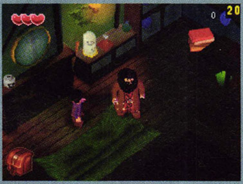
PUBLISHER: **WARNER BROS. INTERACTIVE**
DEVELOPER: **TRAVELLER'S TALES**
Wii DS RELEASE: **MAY 2010**

Potter-ble Gaming



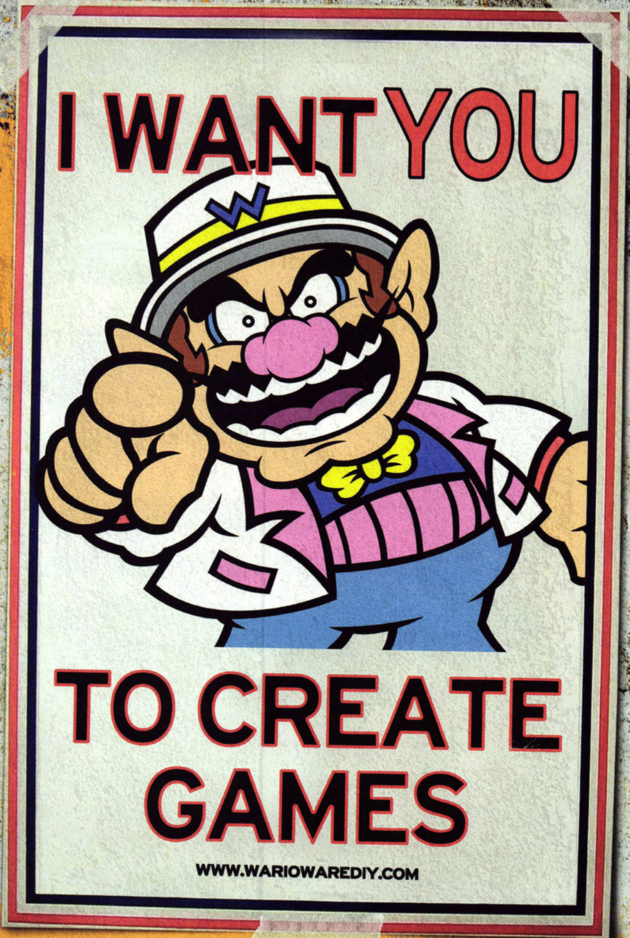
For wizards on the go, LEGO Harry Potter: Years 1–4 will also be coming to the Nintendo DS handheld. Unlike some recent LEGO games for the Nintendo DS, this one features a fixed isometric view of the action, with the DS's top screen showing a map of the immediate vicinity. The game supports the Control Pad, but you can also choose to play entirely with the stylus. The gameplay is more mission-centric than in the Wii version, and although the handheld game shares some similarities with its console big brother, it features ample new levels and quests. Early in the game, for example, Harry is tasked with collecting gifts for Dudley, his oafish cousin. Once Hagrid takes Harry off to Diagon Alley, Harry spends the early part of the level introducing himself to excited patrons at the Leaky Cauldron.

Of course, the action gets a little more exciting once you arrive at Hogwarts. There, you begin to learn spells that are activated with stylus gestures. In addition to valuable techniques like Transfiguration and Wingardium Leviosa, you'll master Reparo and Exploso, which are used to build and blow up LEGO structures within the environment. Other spells will come in handy when you enter the Hogwarts Dueling Club. During these fast-paced battles, you must build statues to hide behind while casting spells at your opponent.



There are more than 100 playable characters in the game, including some that aren't present in the Wii version. For instance, the Nintendo DS is the only place where you'll be able to play as Peeves, the mischievous ghost that appeared in the books but not the movies. Also, unlike the Wii version, the DS iteration provides ample text-based dialogue, which adds to the characterization and lends to the adventure-game feel.

No matter which system you own, you won't be far from Harry's world this spring.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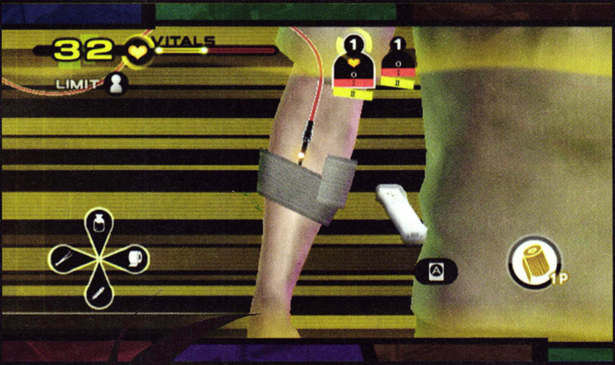
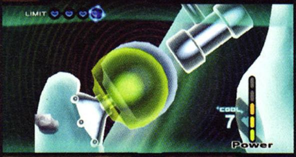
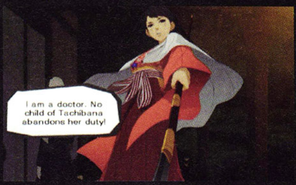
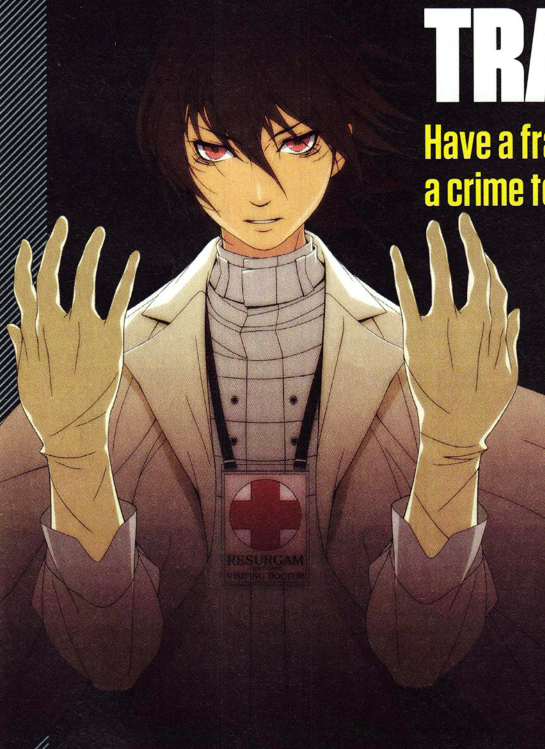





I am a doctor. No child of Tachibana abandons her duty!

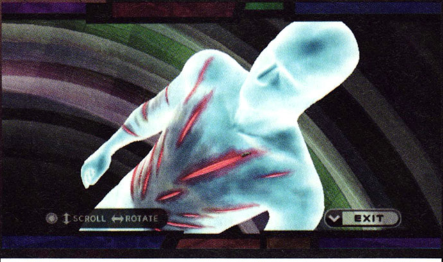
TRAUMA TEAM

Have a fracture to fix, a tumor to excise, or a crime to solve? There are docs for that.

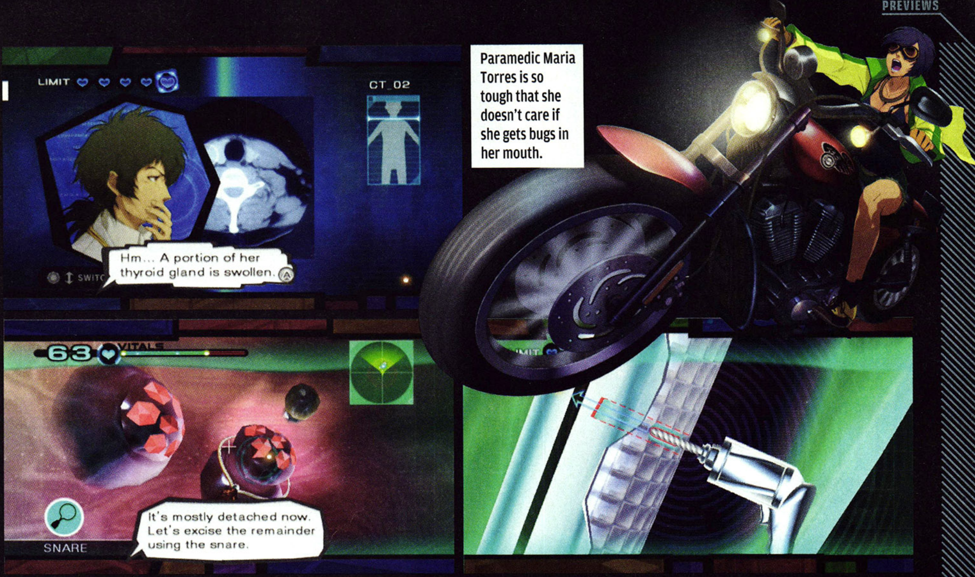


IT MIGHT SEEM that we've covered Trauma Team a lot over the past few issues, but there's a simple reason for that: we're very excited about this Wii title. The game takes the winning Trauma Center formula and adds elements from television programs such as *CSI* and *House, M.D.* How does this work, you ask? By giving you six medical specialists to choose from: amnesiac/criminal/general surgeon CR-S01, short-tempered paramedic Maria Torres, superhero/orthopedic surgeon Hank Freebird, ninja/endoscopic surgeon Tomoe Tachibana, abrasive diagnostician Gabriel Cunningham, and medical-examiner-with-a-mysterious-past Naomi Kimishima. With so many colorful characters (whose stories are told in manga-style cutscenes), there's variety aplenty.

Those who have played the Trauma Center titles will be immediately familiar with the gameplay for CR-S01: it's the classic Trauma Center gameplay you know and love. You perform surgical operations via the Wii Remote controller and select the appropriate medical instru-



[Left] Can you trust a surgeon named CR-S01? [Above] Finding out what the heck happened to this guy is just one of the game's mysteries.


LIMIT
CT_02
Hm... A portion of her thyroid gland is swollen.
SWITC
63
VITALS
It's mostly detached now. Let's excise the remainder using the snare.
SNARE

Paramedic Maria Torres is so tough that she doesn't care if she gets bugs in her mouth.

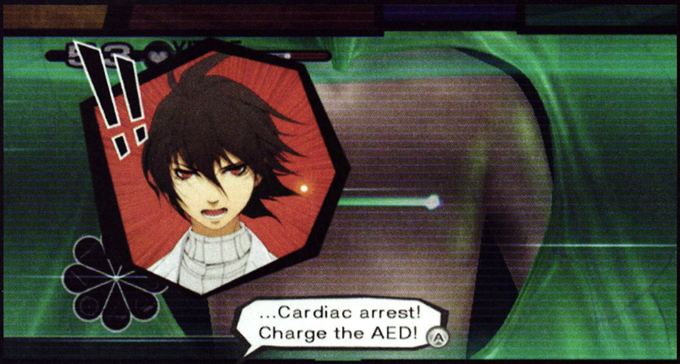
ment from the tool palette with the Control Stick. The gameplay for Maria is somewhat similar to CR-S01's, though instead of working in an operating theater, you're out in the field and trying to stabilize, say, multiple survivors of a theme-park accident by setting fractured limbs and wrapping them with splints and bandages (some of the many context-sensitive items that appear on the lower right of the screen rather than on your palette).

Hank and Tomoe's sections diverge from the typical Trauma Center gameplay even more. With Hank, you're given a set amount of hearts (a health bar, essentially) at the beginning of the operation; mess up, and you'll lose hearts. You don't actually choose your utensils either; the game selects the appropriate one automatically, allowing you to focus on operating on the musculoskeletal system by following the onscreen guidelines with the Wii Remote. Tomoe's scenarios have you exploring patients' insides with an endoscope. You steer the endoscope with the Control Stick, explore your surroundings with the pointer-controlled flashlight, and move forward by holding A and B and moving the remote toward the screen. Of course, you're not there to just look around; you press C to open the tool wheel and select a scalpel to remove tumors, for instance.

The final two characters' sections—in the fields of diagnosis and forensics—are the most radically different. They're more akin to Phoenix Wright-style adventure titles than the Trauma Center games. Gabriel, for example, interviews an older man who refuses treatment. During the interview, you observe abnormal body behavior and sift through his statements to find clues about his condition. This information is given to your talking computer, RONI, to narrow down the possible causes for his condition and to give you enough compelling reasons to perform more in-depth examination procedures (such as a CT scan). Whereas Gabriel's sections are like *House, M.D.*, coroner Naomi's cases are similar to *CSI*, wherein you examine crime scenes and pieces of evidence. Naomi, too, has an assistant—Little Guy, who is represented by a non-customizable Mii character—to help assemble enough evidence to create an airtight case.

Clearly, Trauma Team offers a lot of diversity, but what makes the game especially interesting is the fact that there's often some crossover between the doctors' scenarios. —JUSTIN C.

PUBLISHER: ATLUS
Wii **DEVELOPER: ATLUS**
RELEASE: MAY 2010



MONSTER HUNTER TRI

It takes a village to support a hunter.

The game may have "Monster Hunter" in its title, but there's more to Monster Hunter Tri than just hunting massive beasts. The opening moments of the single-player experience introduce you to Moga Village. From blacksmiths to shopkeepers to farmers, Moga Village is filled with citizens who can provide all sorts of helpful services—for a price, of course. Fortunately, these people also need your help—earthquakes have hit the area, and a sea monster called Lagiacrus has appeared—and the village chief is willing to pay good money for it, as well as give you a residence in which you can store items, customize your character, rest, and save your game.

Your first order of business, however, is to repair your base camp, which was destroyed by the earthquake. (You can't go on quests—and therefore, can't get more money—without a camp.) The village chief tells you that his son will assist you with this matter, so you have to head to the camp to meet with him. Along the way, you encounter your first monsters: the dinosaurlike Aptonoth. These large yet fairly docile creatures don't pose much of a challenge, and you can harvest raw meat from their corpses—the perfect gift for the hungry chief's son. (You can also cook raw meat with a BBQ pit and then eat the well-done monster meat yourself to refill your ever-decreasing Stamina meter.)

The chief's son explains that you need to obtain Resource Points to repair the base camp. And the fastest way to get Resource Points is by hunting monsters. Whereas you get paltry amounts of Resource Points from herbivores such as Aptonoth, you receive significantly larger sums from carnivores such as Jaggi. Hunting Jaggi also provides good practice, as you'll be tasked with dispatching even larger and more-aggressive beasts as the game progresses.

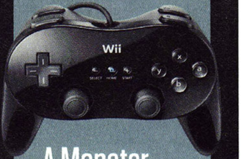
Those who want a challenge without diving into the single-player campaign can attempt to best massive monsters in the game's Arena Play mode. Thankfully, you can cooperate with a buddy via a split screen, which helps even the odds. Plus, playing with a friend gives you a little taste of what the Monster Hunter franchise excels at: four-player online co-op. There's no need for friend codes to play Monster Hunter Tri online; you just log on and hop to it. Once online, you can chat and plan strategies with your allies by using the Wii Speak accessory. —JUSTIN C.

PUBLISHER: CAPCOM

Wii **DEVELOPER:** CAPCOM

RELEASE: APRIL 2010

If you're going hunting by yourself, bring lots of supplies.



A Monster Value

If you want to play Monster Hunter Tri with the Classic Controller Pro, you're in luck: for $59.99, you can get the game and peripheral together in a bundle! Of course, you can get the game alone for $10 less, but considering that the Classic Controller Pro—a markedly more comfortable version of the Classic controller—is going to sell for $19.99 by itself, the bundle is a pretty sweet deal.

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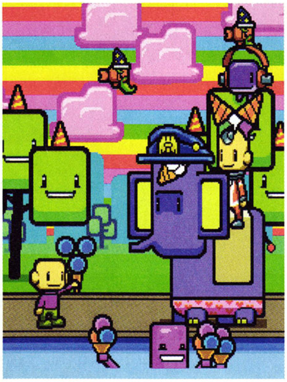
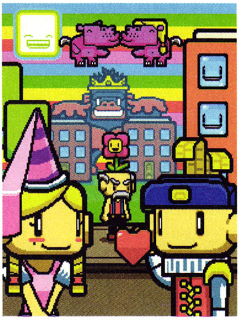
BEAT CITY

We built this city on rock 'n' roll.

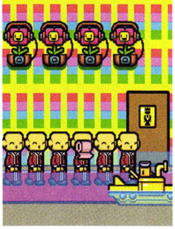
Cut from the same cloth as titles like Rhythm Heaven, Beat City is the latest quirky music game to come to the Nintendo DS. By tapping, sliding, and pressing and releasing your stylus on the touch screen to the music's rhythm (and visual cues), you'll boogie through a variety of wacky scenarios and restore the once-lively Beat City. To send love into the hearts of puppy-kicking mimes, for example, you'll tap the screen as icons scroll by, and you'll help a lad whisper sweet nothings into his beloved's ear by pressing the screen whenever a giant bongo-playing gorilla appears. As you advance through the game, you'll face more-complex challenges that require you to combine input methods, such as a hair-styling scenario in which you must tap to cut hair, swipe to style it, and press and release to...um...paint a dog blue. Successfully maintain the beat, and you'll see the world become a happier, more energetic place before your eyes; fail, and Beat City will be trapped in monotony forever. —**CHRIS H.**

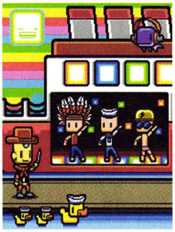
DS PUBLISHER: **THQ** DEVELOPER: **UNIVERSOMO**
RELEASE: **APRIL 2010**

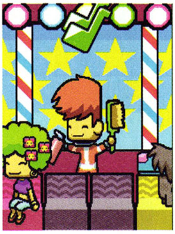




[Above] Hippos smooch, flowers bloom, and giant gorillas pound buildings like bongos. It's just another day in Beat City!







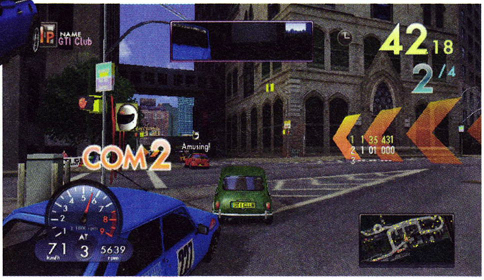
GTI CLUB SUPERMINI FESTA!

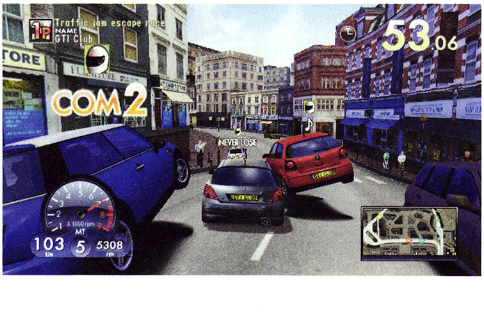
Konami hopes to get more mileage out of its arcade racing series.

Reaching all the way back into the section of its archives labeled "1996," Konami is bringing its GTI Club racing series to Wii with the cheerily titled Supermini Festa! Whereas the original arcade game let players race only on one course on the French Riviera, this modern update includes venues in the UK, France, Italy, Japan, and the US of A. Just like those in its coin-op forerunner, these tracks boast plentiful shortcuts and teeny-tiny cars from Mini and Volkswagen, as well as other manufacturers.

However, we're most excited by the numerous multiplayer game modes that will be playable via Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. These include a version of tag with a bomb, a rush to collect coins, and a competition to see which driver can pelt their opponents with the most tomatoes. (If you hadn't guessed already, this game is far from a driving simulation.) —**RANDY N.**

Wii PUBLISHER: **KONAMI** DEVELOPER: **KONAMI**
RELEASE: **Q2 2010**





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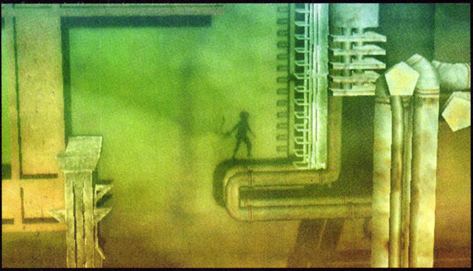
LOST IN SHADOW

The power of the dark side.



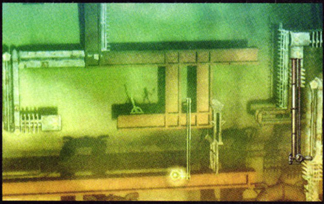
AS THE TITLE suggests, Lost in Shadow is all about, well, shadows. The protagonist—a shadow himself—can interact only with other shadows as he ascends a sun-drenched tower. So, for example, the shadow of a wall on the tower's exterior becomes a floor the hero can run along. Because you're stuck on a 2-D plane, any objects that cast shadows can become platforms to clamber across or hazards to avoid (spiked fences become spiked pits for the main character, for instance).

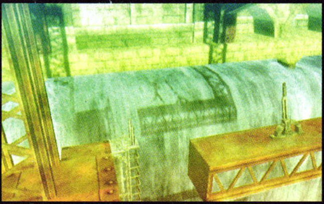
Sometimes, however, there are seemingly impassable barriers in your way—fortunately, you have an ally called Spangle, a sylph you can use to interact with the physical world. Spangle allows you to, say, rotate a physical-world platform that creates a shadow bridge for you to traverse, or to manipulate a moveable light source that drastically modifies the layout of your shadow environment. (Moving the light source to the bottom of the screen causes the world and your character to move toward the top of the screen and vice versa, granting you access to different areas.) The switch to affect objects is often not readily apparent, so you point at the screen with the Wii Remote controller to move Spangle about, and hold B to use the sylph's sonarlike skill to search for the glowing interaction point. Searching for new paths to unlock becomes especially important when looking for the three shadow eyeballs in each level, as you require all three to unlock a massive shadow wall at the end of the stage in order to progress.

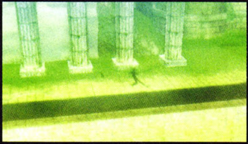
But it's not all platforming and puzzle-solving in Lost in Shadow—there are some baddies, too. During our hands-on time with the game, in addition to shadow dart cannons, we encountered giant shadow spiders and creatures that resemble starfish attached to two balloons. Thankfully, we picked up a sword (just one of the weapons in the game; Hudson remains mum about the rest) early on. Fighting is simple: press B to swing your weapon. At this early stage, most enemies are easily dispatched, but some of the stronger ones managed to chip away at our health. (Interestingly, the hero's health is measured in grams with a maximum of 21g, which is supposedly the weight of the human soul.) Each opponent you defeat gives you experience points that can be used to upgrade your weapons.

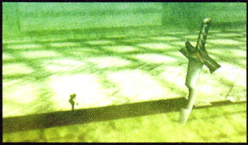
With its dreamlike ambiance and unique gameplay, Lost in Shadow has us very intrigued. Sadly, the game's release date has been pushed back from spring to fall, but hopefully that extra time will be spent on making this already exciting game even better. —**JUSTIN C.**

PUBLISHER: HUDSON
Wii **DEVELOPER: HUDSON**
RELEASE: FALL 2010

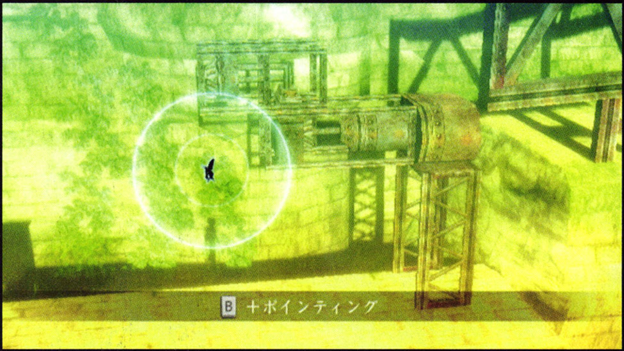




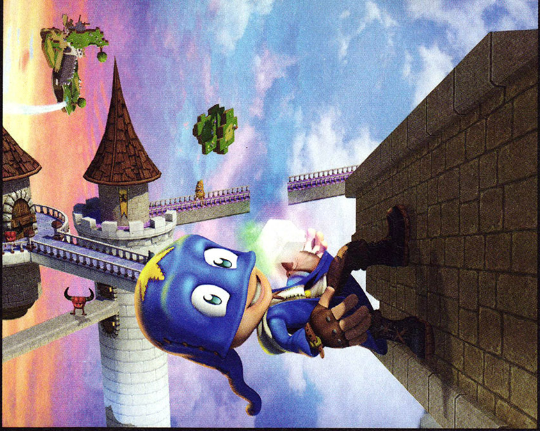




[Right] Spangle is very helpful, as this shot of the Japanese version illustrates.



FLIP'S TWISTED WORLD



It's a twist on platforming like you've never seen before.

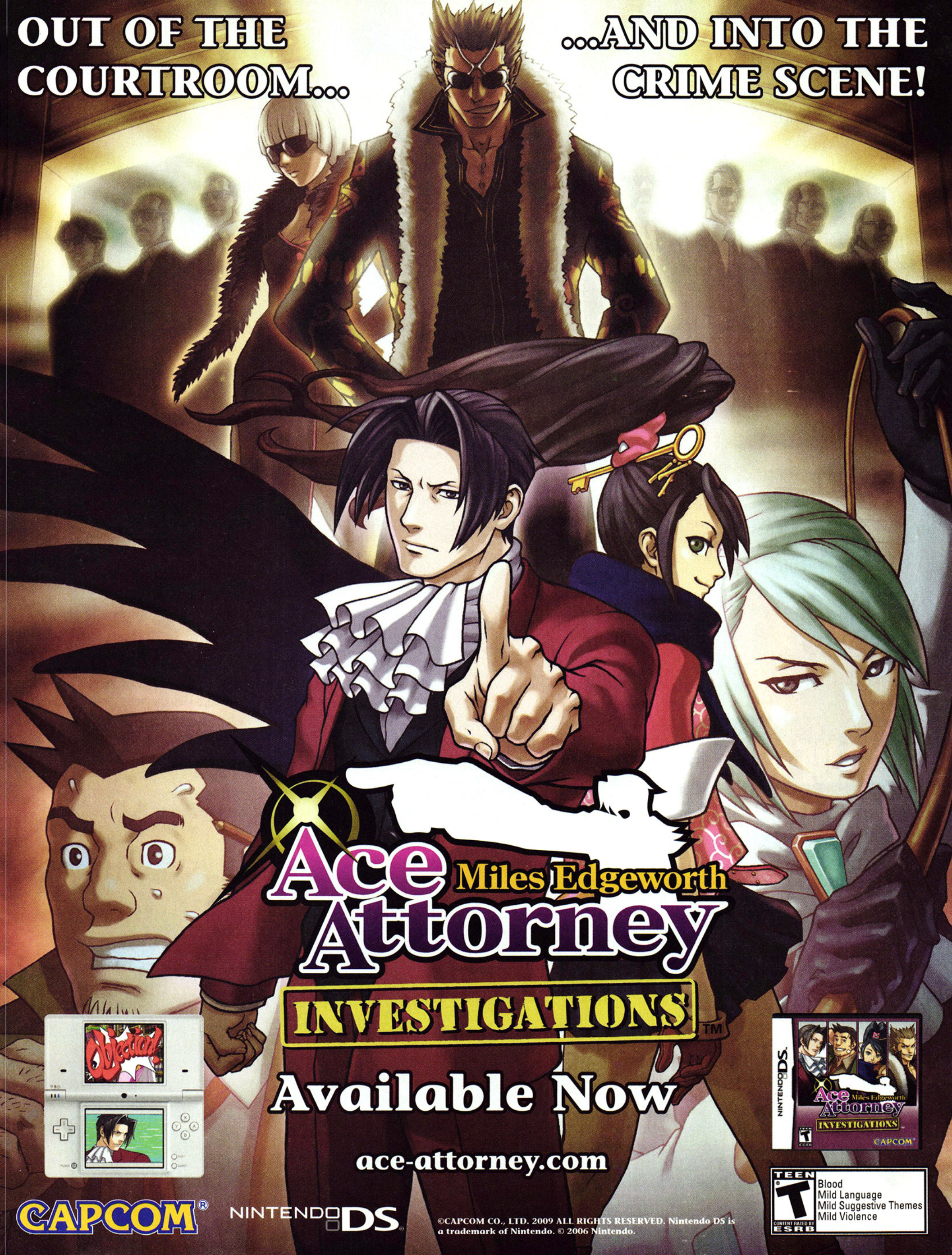
THEY DON'T MAKE many games like Flip's Twisted World anymore. Once upon a time, all you needed was a wacky main character and a nifty gameplay hook, and—BAM!—you had a surefire hit on your hands. Flip's Twisted World features both (along with some absolutely stunning visuals), and the result might be one of the coolest 3-D platformers we've seen in a long time that doesn't star a plumber as the main character.

What sets wannabe magician Flip apart from other platforming heroes is that he can literally turn his world upside down. Sure, he can run, jump (and double jump), collect coins, push blocks, and the like, but by holding down the B Button and twisting the Wii Remote controller, you can make Flip rotate the world 90 degrees. That wall next to you becomes the floor, a pit becomes a passageway, and what was once a strangely floating piece of debris is now a helpful platform. It's a neat trick that allows for some very creative level design and unique platforming puzzles (especially when you're rotating the world while riding moving platforms). You run the risk, of course, of rotating the world the wrong way and throwing yourself to your doom, but fortunately the developers have taken care of that with the arrow that indicates which way the world will spin; it's colored blue if you'll be safe after the rotation, but orange if you'll go splat.

Though Flip's world-turning power is his standout skill, it's not the only ability he's got up his sleeves. You'll also get to use various items (potions for restoring your health, a shield for absorbing attacks, an elixir for temporary invincibility) and wield six different weapons—a heavy book (your standard weapon), a spiked flail, ice spray, a watering cannon, a flaming match, and an electricity-emitting zapper—for bashing bad guys. The weapons double as helpful tools: the match lights torches, the watering cannon makes plants grow traversable leaves, and the zapper pulls metal objects close, for example. An assortment of collectibles, side quests, and nonplayable characters help round out this promising adventure. —**CHRIS H.**

PUBLISHER: **MAJESCO**
DEVELOPER: **FROZEN NORTH PRODUCTIONS**
Wii
RELEASE: **JUNE 2010**

Flip might look a little odd (OK, a *lot* odd), but his platforming abilities are top-notch.


OUT OF THE COURTROOM...
...AND INTO THE CRIME SCENE!
Objection!
Ace Attorney Miles Edgeworth
INVESTIGATIONS™
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ace-attorney.com
NINTENDO DS
Ace Attorney Miles Edgeworth INVESTIGATIONS
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TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Blood
Mild Language
Mild Suggestive Themes
Mild Violence

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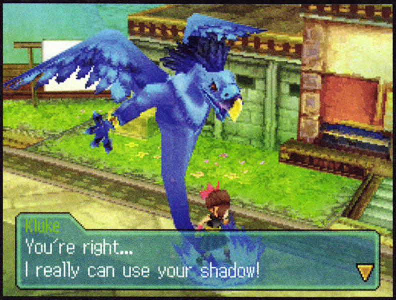
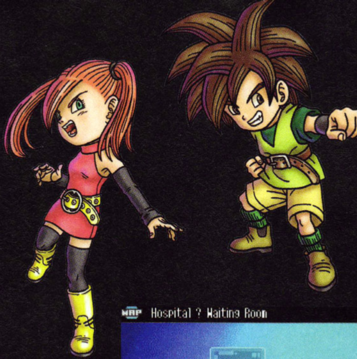
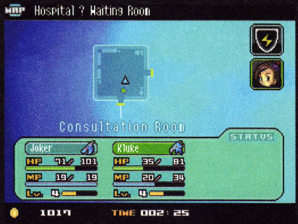
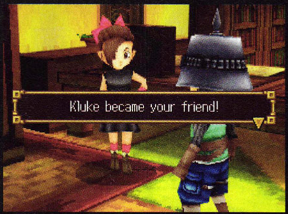
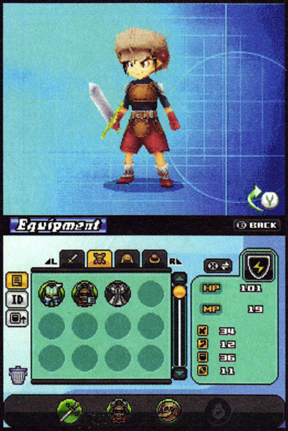
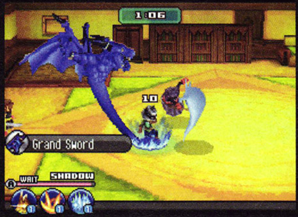

Kluke
You're right...
I really can use your shadow!






Kluke became your friend!





[Above] Your shadow will be happy to lend a hand whenever you can spare a second to charge it.

BLUE DRAGON: AWAKENED SHADOW

The ever-shifting Blue Dragon rises again.

THE BLUE DRAGON series is a bizarre one. The games have a single continuing narrative, but each one has a different genre, developer, and publisher. So whatever your opinion of the previous two games, forget it—Awakened Shadow is a radically different game.

This time, developer tri-Crescendo has taken the reins to create an action-RPG with online multiplayer elements. The game wins points right off the bat by offering a choice between stylus and button-and-Control-Pad control schemes, which you can switch between whenever you like. Characters can wield a wide variety of weapons, and the series's iconic shadows offer a number of charge-up spells to bolster your offense. Useful block and roll functions add an additional layer of strategic depth.

At the beginning of Awakened Shadow, you can create a hero or heroine in your own likeness, provided you have giant eyes and some sort of spiky bouffant hairdo dyed a deeply unnatural color. Your character will soon encounter the cast of the previous Blue Dragon games, and by winning their trust through various quests, can use them as NPC-controlled party members. Awakened Shadow is surprisingly open-ended for a DS title; in addition to a large variety of storyline quests, the world is filled with interdimensional doors that lead to powerful monsters you can challenge any time you like. If you have friends with a copy of the game, you can tackle these bosses together, either wirelessly or over Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. The ability to play online co-op is a rare and very cool feature, but unfortunately the game does not support any form of random matchmaking—you can play with only preregistered friends.

Loot-hunters should have a field day with Awakened Shadow. Not only is there a wide variety of items to earn from enemy drops and treasure chests, but an unusually liberal item-combination system allows to you put them all to good use. Got a bunch of the same sword? Throw 'em into the pot to combine their stats into a single powerful blade. Having trouble beating a boss who's weak to fire? Toss a Fire Gem in with your weapon to give yourself the edge.

The Blue Dragon franchise may be driven by a chimpanzee with a dartboard, but with Awakened Shadow the dart seems to have found a promising target. —CASEY L.

PUBLISHER: D3PUBLISHER
DS **DEVELOPER:** TRI-CRESCENDO
RELEASE: MAY 2010

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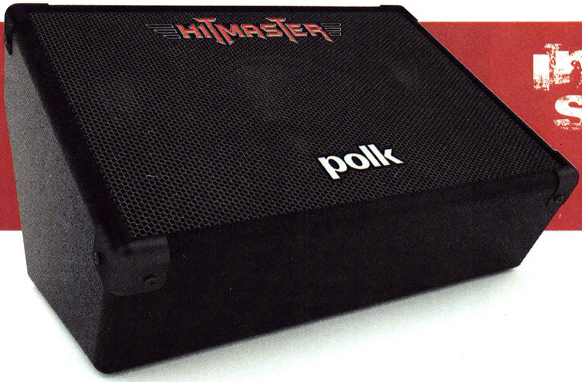

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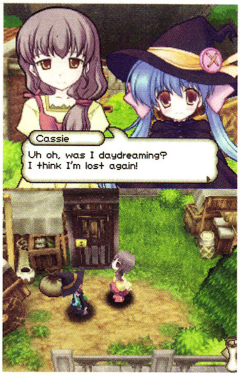
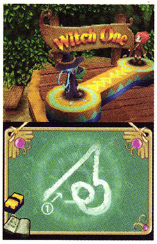




Upper Town
Witch One
Lower Town
Vicky's House

WITCH'S WISH

Adventures in wannabe witchery

I want to make one thing clear from the start: Witch's Wish isn't a hardcore gamer's game. Nor is it just a simple children's storybook game—it's a stylus-driven adventure set within a free-roaming 3-D world.

Vicky is a little girl who wants to master magic, which turns out to be a lot less complicated than she ever thought it would be. They say you need lots of expensive schooling to become a witch, but in fact, all you really need is a "magic board." Scrawl a series of magical runes on the board (which is to say the DS touch screen) and Vicky's spells come to life, ranging from a cloud of burning magic sparks to a dusting of slippery mystical dew.

Saving the world and that sort of thing isn't exactly in Vicky's line of thinking. Her magical ambitions seem to be more about rescuing kittens from tree branches and similar acts of local heroism. There's something to be said for a fantasy adventure that takes a slightly more low-key approach than the usual, though, and dedicated connoisseurs of the disgustingly cute will be all over this game's artwork. Witch's Wish features a surprisingly large game world to wander around, and it seems like there's something silly or colorful to admire around every little corner. —**DAVID S.**

DS PUBLISHER: **NATSUME** DEVELOPER: **YUKE'S**
RELEASE: **SPRING 2010**

Items
Treasures
A shiny badge. If collected, maybe more paintings will appear somewhere? I don't have any.
Close

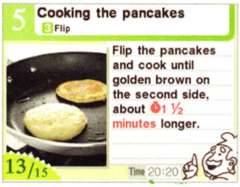
Ms. Daisy
What should I do for dinner?
Do I want fried or baked eggs?

AMERICA'S TEST KITCHEN: LET'S GET COOKING

Food for thought

We've played every version of Cooking Mama, grown and prepared our own food in Harvest Moon, beaten dozens of culinary-themed WarioWare microgames, and even challenged BurgerTime on the NES, but we admit it—none of the NP crew members are very good at cooking in real life. But maybe America's Test Kitchen: Let's Get Cooking for the DS will change that. It's not a game; it's an interactive cookbook with 300 recipes in a dozen categories, from appetizers to vegetables to pasta to meat dishes to desserts. Everything from nachos to prime rib is covered, and you can sort the recipes by difficulty, ingredients (things you like or things you want to avoid), and calorie counts to find the recipe that's right for you. The software will help you figure out what ingredients to buy and what utensils to have on hand, then take you through every step of the cooking process, complete with illustrations. There are even informative videos of cooking techniques and glossaries of food terms. Even if America's Test Kitchen doesn't turn you into a gourmet chef, it might convince your parents to want another DS in the house. —**CHRIS H.**

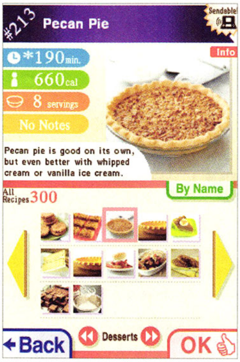
DS PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO** DEVELOPER: **INDIES ZERO**
RELEASE: **MARCH 2010**



5 Cooking the pancakes
3 Flip

Flip the pancakes and cook until golden brown on the second side, about 1 ½ minutes longer.

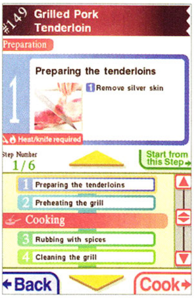
13/15
Time 20:20



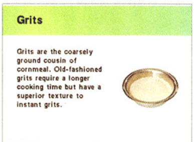
#213 Pecan Pie
Sendable!
Info
*190min.
660cal
8 servings
No Notes

Pecan pie is good on its own, but even better with whipped cream or vanilla ice cream.

By Name
All Recipes 300
←Back
Desserts
OK



#149 Grilled Pork Tenderloin
Preparation
1 Preparing the tenderloins
1 Remove silver skin
Heat/knife required
Step Number 1/6
Start from this Step→
1 Preparing the tenderloins
2 Preheating the grill
Cooking
3 Rubbing with spices
4 Cleaning the grill
←Back
Cook→



Grits

Grits are the coarsely ground cousin of cornmeal. Old-fashioned grits require a longer cooking time but have a superior texture to instant grits.

[Above] If you desperately need info about grits (or pretty much any other ingredient), America's Test Kitchen's got it.

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9.0
"It's no wonder 360 and PS3 fans are begging for the game... a true gem worthy of the Capcom fighting legacy."
–IGN.com

9.0
"It's the most interesting and exciting fighting game to hit the market in years... buy it immediately."
–Destructoid.com

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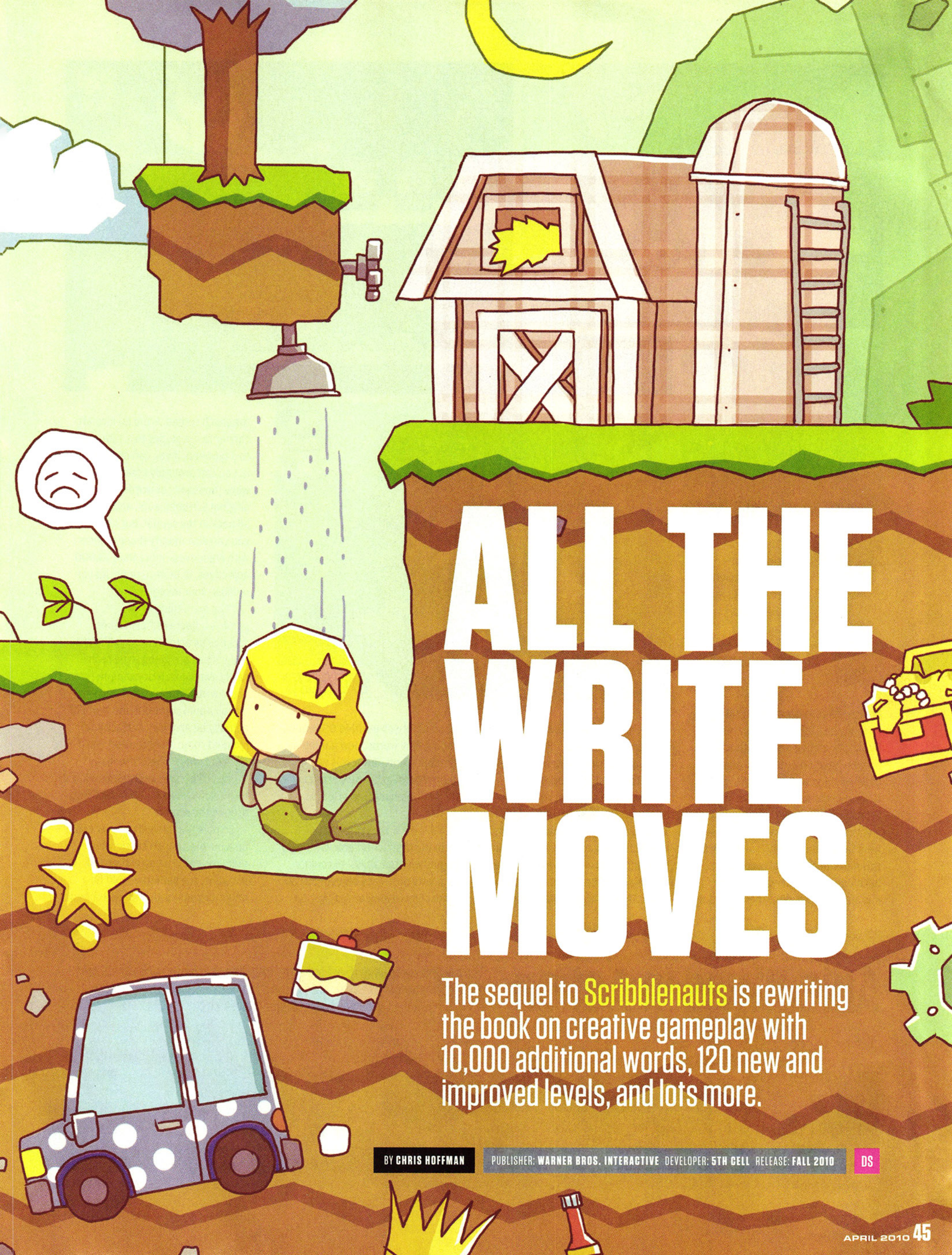
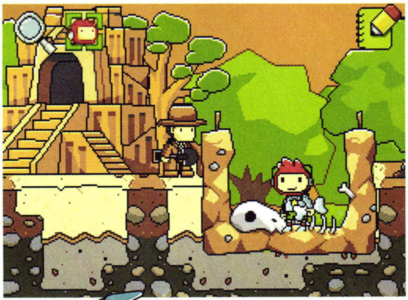


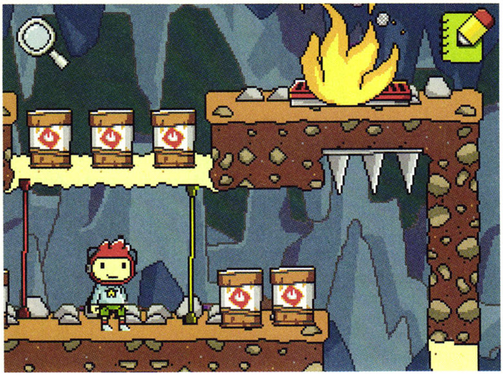
ALL THE WRITE MOVES

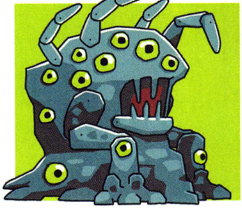
The sequel to Scribblenauts is rewriting the book on creative gameplay with 10,000 additional words, 120 new and improved levels, and lots more.

BY **CHRIS HOFFMAN**

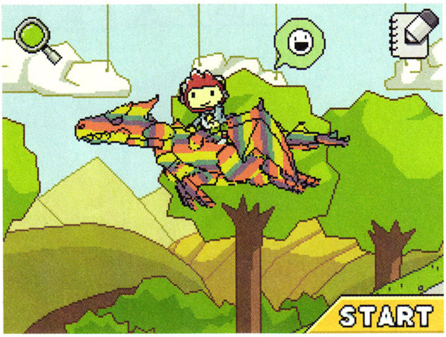
PUBLISHER: **WARNER BROS. INTERACTIVE** DEVELOPER: **5TH CELL** RELEASE: **FALL 2010** **DS**







[Left] Create whatever you want—even a horrifying yet adorable Shoggoth.



The original Scribblenauts for the Nintendo DS handheld was nothing short of amazing. Words such as "groundbreaking" and "unique" hardly do it justice. Its core premise—creating virtually any object for in-game use by simply writing it on the touch screen—might be the most mind-blowing thing we've ever witnessed in a video game. Admittedly, Scribblenauts wasn't perfect, but it was so fresh, so different, and so fun that it didn't really matter. And this unrivaled spirit of innovation hasn't gone unnoticed; the game has already sold more than a million copies and earned numerous industry awards (including handily winning the 2009 Nintendo Power Award for Best New Idea). After enjoying such success, you might think that the folks at developer 5th Cell and publisher Warner Bros. Interactive would want to just kick back and revel in the adulation, but nothing could be further from the truth. They're already hard at work on an as-of-yet-untitled DS sequel, adding new words, new gameplay elements, and new levels while improving nearly every aspect of the Scribblenauts experience.

THE POWER OF THE PEN

As in the first Scribblenauts, the fun begins with the ability to conjure up pretty much any object you can think of by writing or typing it on the touch screen. From an aircraft carrier to a platypus to a samurai to a typhoon, if you can conceive of it, you can probably create it. There were thousands of words in the original Scribblenauts, and they're all back in the sequel. But now you can also modify those objects with adjectives—more than 10,000 adjectives, in fact—to really let you unleash your imagination.

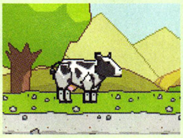
"The main thing in this game is adjectives," proclaims creative director Jeremiah Slaczka. "Adjectives are going to be really, really awesome. [For example,] you could write 'furious pear' and then a pear would come out and it would actually be angry and attack you. It would come after you and you'd have to fight it. There's so many things. Like 'supersonic tomato'...it'd be a really, really fast tomato flying around the screen."

So now that aircraft carrier could be a purple aircraft carrier, the platypus could be an exhausted platypus, the samurai could be a miniature samurai, and the typhoon

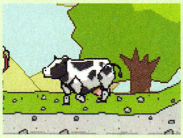
Adjectives in Action

The biggest addition to the game is the inclusion of adjectives (which, in case you ditched school one year, are words that modify nouns). We decided to apply a few adjectives to a hapless heifer and watch the results.

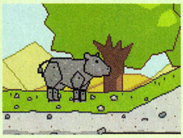
COW



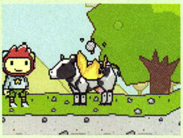
OBESE COW



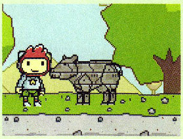
PETRIFIED COW



BURNING COW



ROBOTIC COW

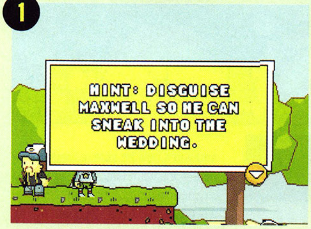


Anatomy of a Level

According to lead designer Sean Wissler, the best Scribblenauts stages tend to involve a recognizable theme, a variety of objects, and a light narrative. Here's an example of how one of the new multipart levels brings all of those components together.

In this stage, Maxwell plays the part of a wedding crasher. He needs to get into the wedding, retrieve the ex-boyfriend's present, and get it back to him.

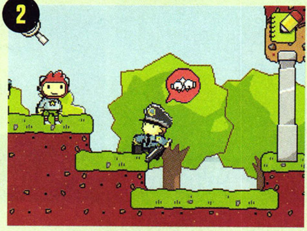
1



HINT: DISGUISE MAXWELL SO HE CAN SNEAK INTO THE WEDDING.

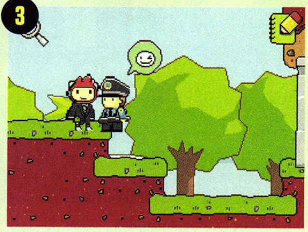
There's a security guard at the door. If he sees someone suspicious, like Maxwell, he'll throw him out.

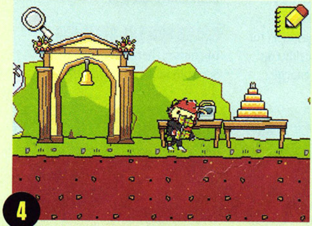
2



If you put on some formal wear, the guard will think you're an invited guest and you'll be able to sneak in.

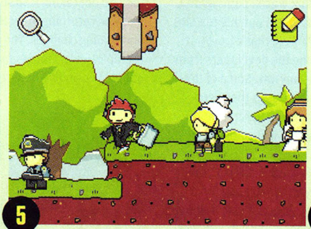
3





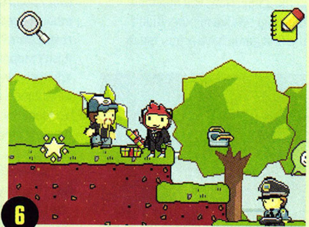
4

Now that you've made it to the wedding, you need to grab the present and get out without being noticed.



5

No one will be able to tell that you've got the present if you hide it in something like a bag. Now you're free to leave.



6

Upon returning the present to the ex-boyfriend, Maxwell is rewarded with a Starite.

could be a magical typhoon. And though players will, doubtlessly, spend hours upon hours just coming up with wacky new creations (there are billions of them) just for laughs, your choices factor into getting through the game's levels, too. Remember in the first Scribblenauts how any time you made a bridge, the bridge was almost always too short to be useful? Now you can simply make a "long bridge." Or if you desire to ride a kraken through the ocean but don't want to get devoured, you can create a "friendly kraken." (That's right—you can now ride any creature without using a mind-control helmet.)

One of the coolest aspects of Scribblenauts is that the objects you create have properties that interact with one another—fire burns wooden things, for example, and water extinguishes fire—and thanks to the inclusion of adjectives, you can add even more properties and interactions.

"You could write 'magnetic tree' and 'metallic skunk' and then they would be attracted to each other instantly," Slaczka explains. "You could write 'feline cop' or 'canine fireman' and then they'd act like cats and dogs and chase mice and chase after each other and... maybe be attracted to catnip or fire hydrants."

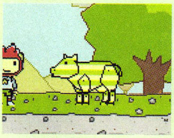
Adjectives don't just change how objects behave or how they're used; they can also change their appearance. "If you wrote 'zombie car,' that would change the appearance of the car to make it more like a zombie," says Slaczka. "Like it'd have its flesh rotting [and] zombie things. If you wrote 'polka-dotted' or 'orange' or 'metallic' or 'wood,' those all definitely change the appearance. Like a wooden ballerina—she's definitely going to have a wood tone on her."

Perhaps best of all is the fact that you're not limited to a single adjective per object. You can stack several adjectives on top of each other to modify an object in multiple ways simultaneously. "You can go crazy with it," Slaczka confirms. "You could write, like, 'undead, hungry, robotic, flying, feline, winged, frozen tree.'"

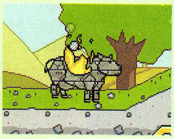
And, fortunately, you don't have to worry about writing all of those words every time you use them. An inclusion called the Adjective Toolbar will remember what adjectives you've used and allow you to select from the list any time you want, making it that much easier for you to fill a city with sad, iridescent, vampiric objects of your choosing.

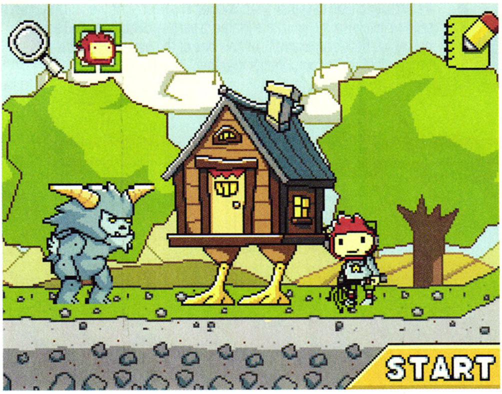
But the new words aren't limited to just adjectives. There are also hundreds of new objects (nouns)

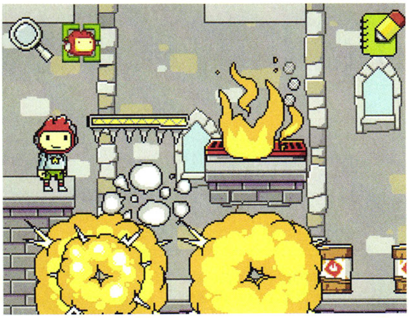
STRIPED COW



OBESE, PETRIFIED, BURNING, ROBOTIC, STRIPED COW







[Above] Maxwell looks innocent, but he can be pretty destructive, too.

in the game. Now, you might be thinking, "Wait a minute. Didn't the first game have pretty much every noun that wasn't copyrighted, ethnic-based, or left out due to ESRB restrictions?" Well, that's true, but it isn't stopping the developers from adding nouns anyway. Some of the new objects are things that were accidentally left out before, while many of them are just completely off the wall.

"Now we're kind of on that crazy level where we're just doing fun stuff," admits Slaczka. "Like a clone gun. If you shoot it at a cat, it makes a cloned cat. With the adjective system it *is* a 'cloned cat.' It's not just another cat. We want to do an arcade machine that you can actually play. There's going to be a growth ray that makes things get larger, [and a] force field you can actually put over something. We did these crazier objects that don't exist in real life. Everything's about being fun and not taking it so seriously."

Some returning objects are undergoing changes. The jetpack, for example, will no longer quickly run out of juice and need to recharge, and you'll now be able to load any object you want (say, a hamster) into a cannon. Other objects, meanwhile, will be altered to differentiate them from similar objects.

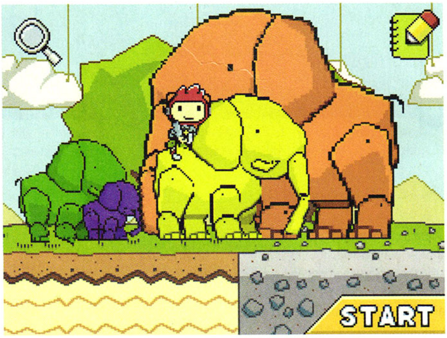
REACH FOR THE STARITES

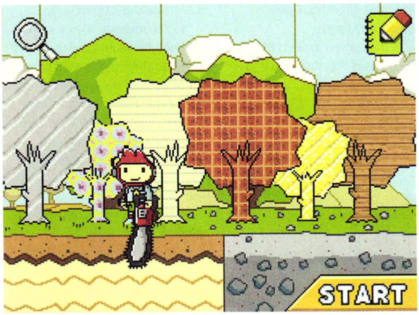
Of course, there's more to the Scribblenauts sequel than new

Words to the Wise: Adjectives

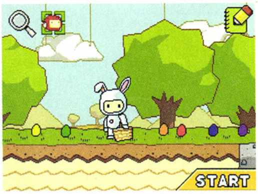
The Scribblenauts sequel features more than 10,000 adjectives you can use to modify objects. Here's a random list of 30 of them.

amphibian	angry
awesome	baby
canine	colossal
decapitated	electrified
feline	fiery
flying	frozen
hated	hypnotic
insane	invincible
lycanthropic	magical
magnetic	metallic
poisoned	polka-dotted
robotic	romantic
sticky	supersonic
terrifying	undead
vampiric	winged





[Above] Thanks to the power of adjectives, you can make a forest of out of whatever materials you can dream up. One question, though: what do you use to cut down a solid-steel tree? A solid-steel beaver?

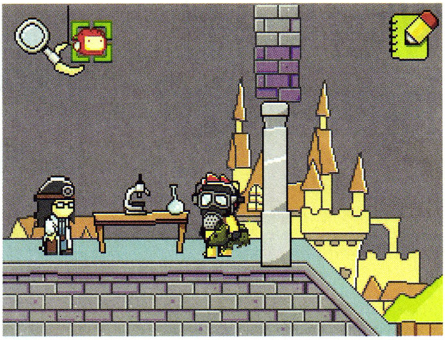


words. It also has an all-new assortment of levels—all with multiple solutions—that promise to be even better than those in the original game. Whereas the first Scribblenauts had 220 levels, the sequel will have 120, but they'll be longer and more refined.

"The reason why we're doing [only] 120 levels is because we want to make a really polished experience," Slaczka confesses. "We're really trying to focus on making awesome levels that are deep and interesting and entertaining."

The levels will no longer be equally divided between action stages (which focused on traversing the terrain to reach the star-shaped Starite at the end) and puzzle stages (which emphasized creating objects to achieve a level-specific goal and thus earn the Starite). Now all the levels will be mixed together, with a much stronger emphasis on the puzzle-solving type, since those are the levels that encourage the most creativity and diverse item use. (They're also the ones that fans of the first game were most enthusiastic about.)

The levels won't be separated into themed worlds, either, but rather into groups that take the form of constellations (when you complete each group, its constellation will come to life), and there's no restriction on what those levels will contain. "The themes, we felt, were too limiting for puzzles," states Slaczka. "We really wanted our designers to go wild."



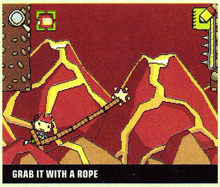
So far, so good. In one level, the game's hero, Maxwell, must put ingredients into a device called the Create-a-Tron to make a werewolf. In another, he must find a cure for a girl infected with the plague by seeking out the diseased animal that caused the plague, taking it to a doctor, and helping the doctor manufacture a cure. Other levels involve helping Maxwell get to the front of the line for the launch

Where There's a Word, There's a Way

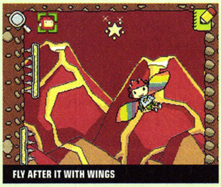
Like in the first Scribblenauts, the levels in the sequel don't have just one solution. Here are a few different ways to get through some early stages.

Snag the Starite

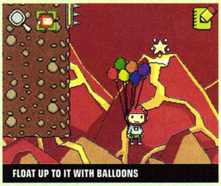
The Starite in this level isn't just a regular Starite—it's a flying Starite—and it's trying to get away from Maxwell. You need to snag it by any means you see fit!



GRAB IT WITH A ROPE



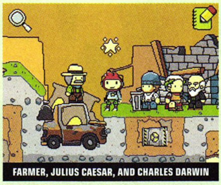
FLY AFTER IT WITH WINGS



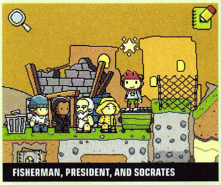
FLOAT UP TO IT WITH BALLOONS

Recruitment Drive

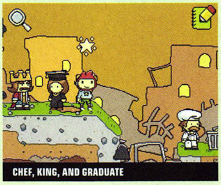
In this stage, Maxwell must select professionals in three categories (food, government, and education) to head into space and found a colony.



FARMER, JULIUS CAESAR, AND CHARLES DARWIN



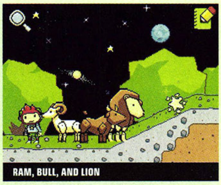
FISHERMAN, PRESIDENT, AND SOCRATES



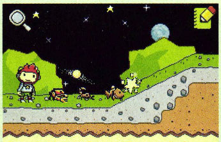
CHEF, KING, AND GRADUATE

What's Your Sign?

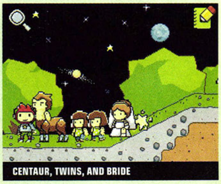
You must create objects that correspond to astrological signs to succeed in this stage. There are 12 signs; any three of them will award you the Starite.



RAM, BULL, AND LION



CRAB, SCORPION, AND FISH



CENTAUR, TWINS, AND BRIDE

What Would Jeremiah Do?

Scribblenauts creative director Jeremiah Slaczka and his team have been hard at work devising new levels to challenge players. We decided to turn the tables by posing a few hypothetical level situations for Jeremiah to write his way out of.

NINTENDO POWER **The Starite has been consumed by a gorilla who's trapped in a cage. It's surrounded by four armed poachers in the middle of a swamp. How do you get the Starite?**

JEREMIAH SLACZKA I'd try to distract the poachers with some kind of animal skin. I'd tie it to a tree and hang it in a way so that they'd all run to it but couldn't get it. Then I could write "key" to unlock [the cage], and then for the gorilla, I could write "disgusting banana," and then he could eat the banana, and then he'd throw [the Starite] up.

You're in a nuclear power plant that's about to have a meltdown and explode. How do you prevent the explosion and thus earn the Starite?

Do I actually see the reactor or am I at the control panel? If I was actually in the core, and the plutonium was there, I would write "monsoon" and have the monsoon just rain on it and cool it down.

This multipart scenario involves helping an apprentice ninja pass the trials of the body, mind, and spirit. First, he has to survive a drop down a deep pit that's too narrow for a parachute. Second, he encounters a room with three trees, and he has to determine which tree is actually a ninja master in disguise. And finally, he has to get through a cave that has a constantly regenerating wall of flame.

Well, the first part, I could write "large blanket" or "superlarge blanket" or "humongous, enormous blanket," so that he could hold onto it as he goes down. The second one, that's actually easy. He's disguised as a tree? I would write "pirate," because no ninja could ever resist fighting a pirate, so that ninja master would have to reveal himself to fight the pirate. And then I would write "flame-retardant gi" and equip it onto the ninja.

party of a new video game; finding the ingredients for a love potion so a witch can romance a monster; choosing an animal with similarities to a pair of caged animals; and rescuing students who are encased in fire, ice, and stone.

Some levels feature multiple phases and an overarching narrative, such as a spy-infiltration level in which Maxwell must sneak info a formal dance, meet up with his contact to get a key card, disable a security camera and deal with the guards, gather loot from a safe, and then make a clean getaway in his vehicle. To ensure you're on the right track and to minimize player frustration, the game now has a feature called the Universal Feedback System, which tells you if you've satisfactorily completed objectives or not.

Additionally, levels take advantage of the new adjective system in various ways. A simple example: you might have to make a person happy by providing him with an object of a certain color. Sometimes adjectives are applied to the Starite, too; on one stage the Starite is magnetic, and on another stage you encounter a chocolate Starite that you have to claim before it's devoured by a bunch of sugar junkies.

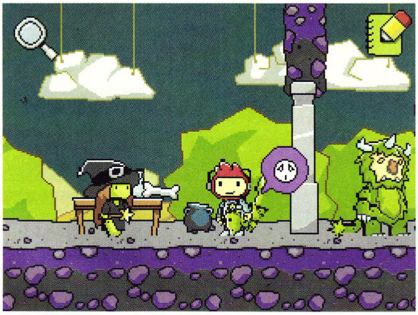
You'll get to fool around on all-new title-screen "playgrounds," too. Like in the first Scribblenauts, these free-form areas let you spend as much time as you want creating anything you can dream up, but this time the game saves your work. Whatever you've made will still be there the next time you turn on the game.

REWRITING THE RULES

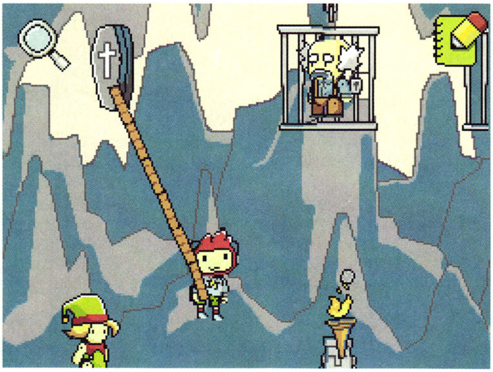
Just as important as all the new content is the fact that 5th Cell is addressing all the niggling complaints that players had about the original Scribblenauts. The team had only a year to develop the entirety of the first game; now that all the core gameplay and mechanics are already in place, they'll be able to devote plenty of time to ironing out any wrinkles.

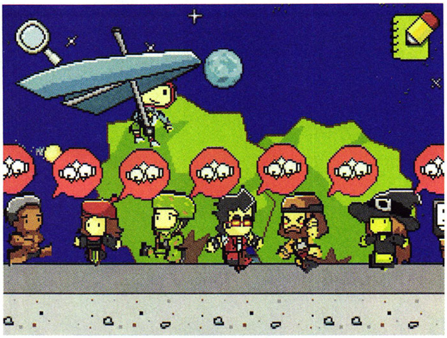
"There were definitely some issues that we wanted to resolve [from] the first one," confirms Slaczka. "There's things that fans see where controls and some physics issues [could have been improved]. There's a lot of things about the puzzles that we've learned...from people playing the game. So we just wanted to make a better overall experience."

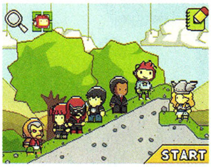
One of the biggest improvements is to the controls. Previously, players tapped the screen to tell Maxwell



[Above] A classic romance: witch meets monster and it's love at first sight. If you can find the ingredients for a love potion, that is.







where to go, and also tapped the screen to move items. Now you have a choice between two schemes you can switch between at any time; you can move Maxwell directly via the Control Pad while using the touch screen to move the camera and interact with objects, or you can move Max via an improved touch-screen interface. If you use the touch screen, Maxwell will move only while you're pressing down on the screen; he won't run off on his own, and he won't start accidentally running around when you're just trying to use items.

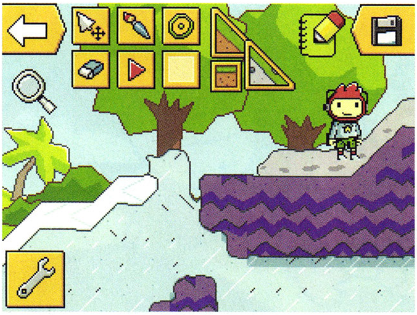
"He won't run off into pits and fall into the water or fall into the lava, which could be very frustrating," asserts Slaczka. "He won't knock things over. He's very controlled. Before he was more like an AI where you'd point somewhere and he'd kind of run after things. Now you're in direct control of him."

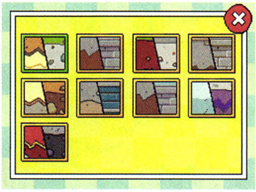
You also now have more control over the camera. Instead of automatically repositioning itself over Maxwell after a couple seconds of inactivity (which could be pretty annoying if you were trying to do something that wasn't near Max), the camera now features an onscreen button that you tap to make the camera snap back. The game physics have been addressed, too. Objects have more weight, so you won't accidentally knock everything over when you move Max onto a stack of carefully arranged items, and you can now attach glue or ropes to any part of an object or the environment, instead of just at fixed points.

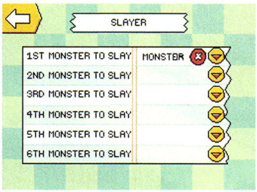
The level editor has been fleshed out, as well. You'll be able to build levels completely from scratch in addition to modifying existing levels, and you'll be able to create both action and puzzle levels. (The first game let you make only action levels.) By using puzzle-stage templates, you'll be able to make levels in which you have to win a race against an adversary, satisfy a nonplayable character's needs, or defeat specific enemies to make the Starite appear, for example. Naturally, you can still share levels with other players, either locally or via Wi-Fi.

In addition, 5th Cell has made a number of smaller adjustments. The par system (beating levels using a limited number of objects) has been removed since the developers thought it hurt players' creativity, but they've added a lot more merits—awards for completing miscellaneous in-game tasks. Advanced mode (trying to beat a level multiple times with different solutions), meanwhile, has been relegated only to stages where it makes sense, and a new hint system has been implemented. After spending enough time on a stage with no luck, additional hints become available; if you want the hints immediately, you can spend your Ollars (the in-game currency you receive for beating levels) to unlock them. Speaking of Ollars, the game will include numerous goodies to purchase. The creators haven't decided on all of them yet, but a number of all-new playable avatars will be among the offerings.

So far 5th Cell is doing everything possible to deliver an ideal sequel: keeping what worked, improving what didn't, and adding all sorts of content to keep players entertained for months on end. The sequel to Scribblenauts may not be as revolutionary as its predecessor, but the final product is likely to be better in every respect, and that's saying a lot. We'll find out just how good it is when the game hits this fall.







SLAYER

1ST MONSTER TO SLAY	MONSTER
2ND MONSTER TO SLAY	
3RD MONSTER TO SLAY	
4TH MONSTER TO SLAY	
5TH MONSTER TO SLAY	
6TH MONSTER TO SLAY	

The level editor is far more robust than the one in the original Scribblenauts. Now you can build levels from scratch, select what tile sets to use, and implement rules to create your own puzzle levels.

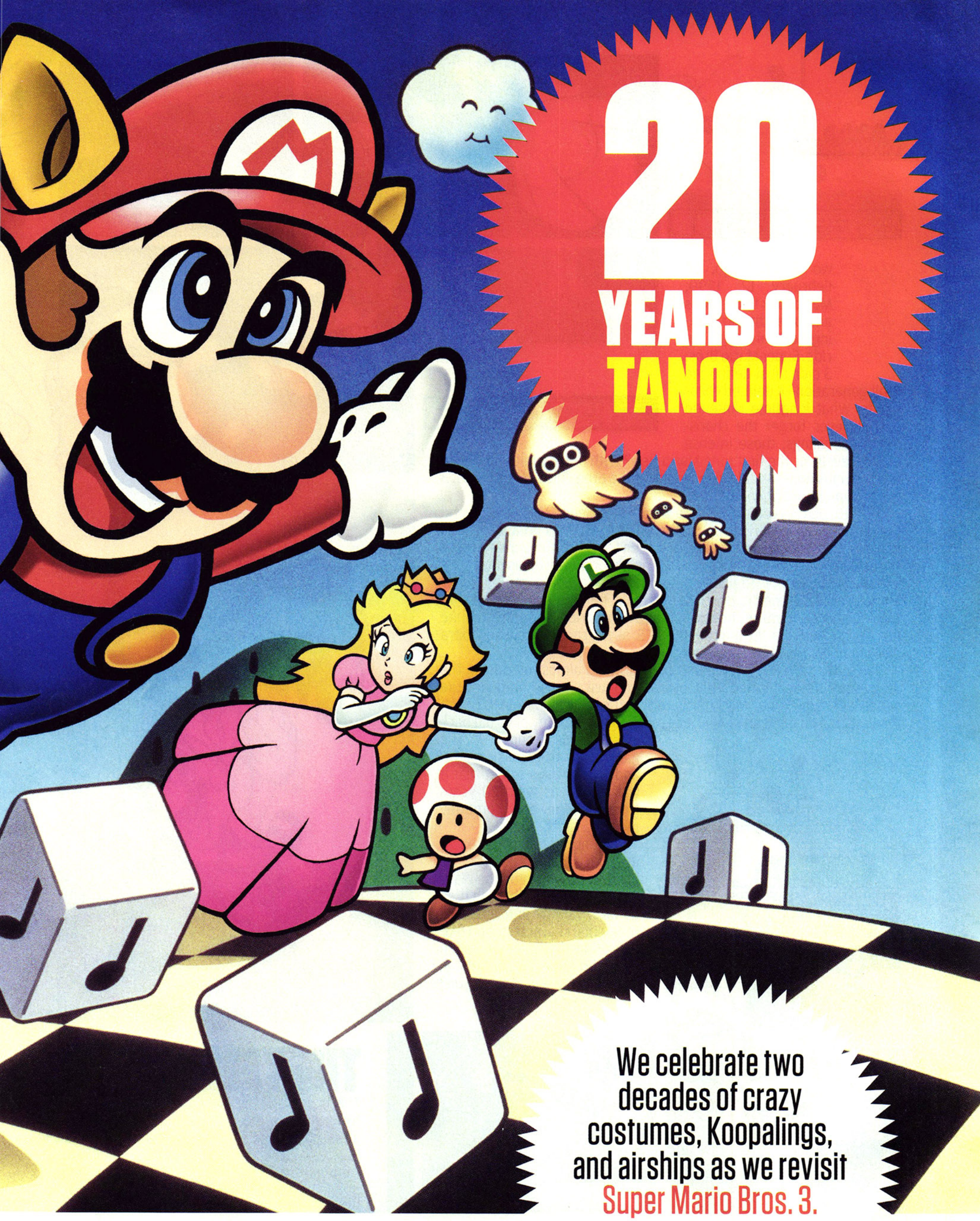
Words to the Wise: Nouns

In addition to the thousands of nouns from the original Scribblenauts, the sequel features hundreds more. Here are 10 all-new nouns and 10 that have been thoroughly redone.

NEW	REDONE
ball and chain	bling
bee suit	cryptozoologist
cosplay costume	dragon egg
dragon wings	dungeon
Easter bunny	elixir of life
growth ray	golden orb weaver
Guy Fawkes mask	meteor shower
sandstorm	time traveler
Thor	Trojan horse
vigilante	villainess

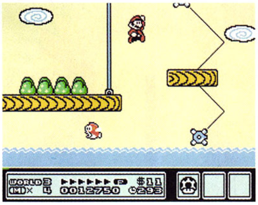
BY **CHRIS SLATE**

PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO** DEVELOPER: **NINTENDO** RELEASE: **FEBRUARY 12, 1990**



20 YEARS OF TANOOKI

We celebrate two decades of crazy costumes, Koopalings, and airships as we revisit Super Mario Bros. 3.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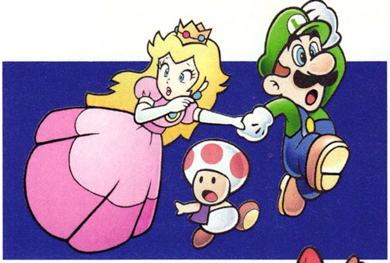

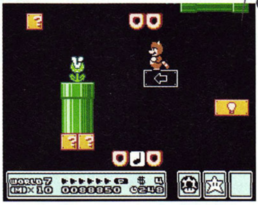
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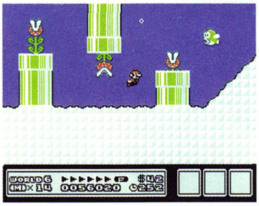
Two decades ago, on February 12, 1990, Mario took to the skies and brought the gaming world along for the ride. Super Mario Bros. 3 didn't just define the 8-bit generation—it defined childhoods. What longtime Nintendo fan will ever forget the charismatic Koopalings, those intense airship levels, or the first time Mario flew? With more copies sold than any previous non-bundled video game at the time, Super Mario Bros. 3 was a pop-culture phenomenon.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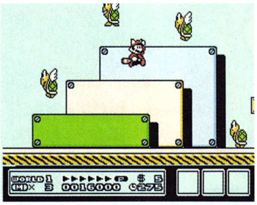
In 1990, players couldn't believe what a huge leap SMB3 was beyond the original Super Mario Bros. Super Mario Bros. 2, as great as it was, had been essentially a side title that didn't fit with the series's usual style. (And for good reason: as any Mario historian worth his mustache knows, SMB2 wasn't originally designed to be a Mario game.) Super Mario Bros. 3 returned to the classic formula, but improved upon it with fun new moves, features, power-ups, and rich worlds to explore. It quite literally pushed past the limits of the NES, as the cartridge carried extra chips to boost the system's power.

This is the rare 8-bit game that has gathered almost no dust in the years since its debut. Seriously, even if you just jumped on board the series with New Super Mario Bros. Wii, you can download SMB3 from the Wii Shop Channel and enjoy it as much today as many of us did back when it was brand new. The game is a true masterpiece, and we're willing to bet that it will be just as good 20 years from now. They don't come any more classic than this.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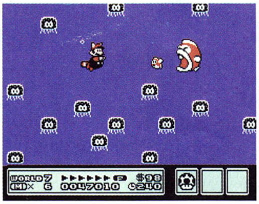
In honor of the game reaching such a major milestone, we invite you to join us in the Warp Zone to take a trip back in time as we recall the unforgettable moments, characters, and features that first made us fall in love with Super Mario Bros. 3. Everyone in their Tanooki Suit? OK, let's-a go!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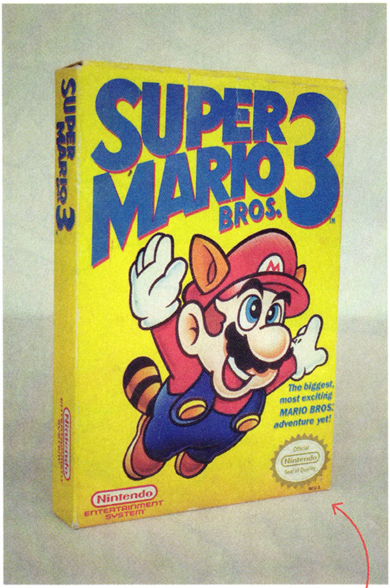
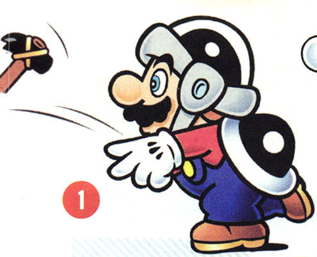
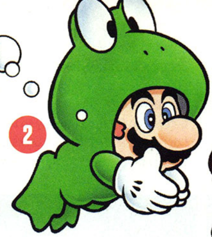
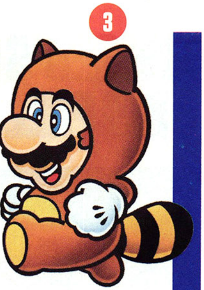

SUPER MARIO BROS. 3
The biggest, most exciting MARIO BROS. adventure yet!
Official Nintendo Seal of Quality
Nintendo
ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

THE YELLOW BOX

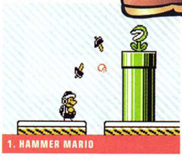
This is perhaps the most iconic package in the history of gaming. We couldn't tell you what a lot of game boxes from our youth looked like, but we'll never forget the sunburst of awesomeness that this piece of folded cardboard provided. Look at Raccoon Mario's face—he's thrilled just to be on it!

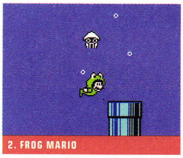


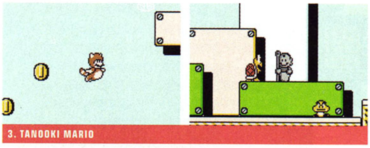




CRAZY COSTUMES


1. HAMMER MARIO

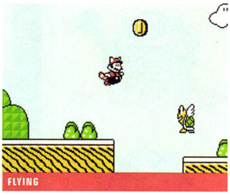

2. FROG MARIO

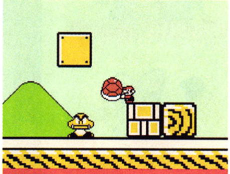

3. TANOOKI MARIO

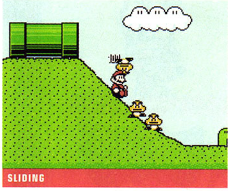
In addition to using the usual size- and ability-changing power-ups, Mario learned that the goofier he looked, the more dangerous he became. Whereas the more common Super Leaf could give Mario the ears and tail needed to get off the ground, donning the Tanooki Suit offered flight plus the power to disguise himself as a statue to hide from enemies. The Frog Suit wasn't of much use on land but made swimming a lot easier, and using the Hammer Suit to crack the skull of a Hammer Brother was poetic justice. Silly suits have appeared in other Mario games (such as the Bee Mario and Boo Mario iterations in Super Mario Galaxy), but the fashion fun all started here.

COOL MOVES

In Super Mario Bros. 3, Mario learned not only to slide down hills and carry Koopa shells and bricks (which worked quite differently from lifting items in SMB2), but also to fly. The ability to search the skies opened up a whole new world of exploration, and nothing beats the satisfying sound generated by plowing through a row of Goombas while on your butt.

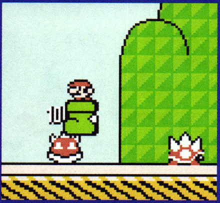

FLYING

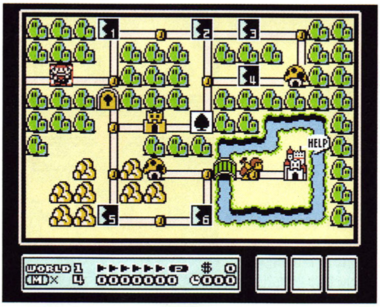

CARRYING

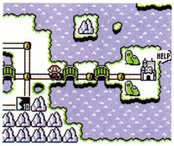

SLIDING

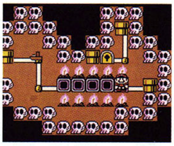
KURIBO'S SHOE

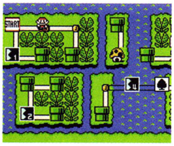
One of the all-time best Mario power-ups can be found only in World 5-3. In this stage, the usually helpless Goombas go after Mario in big hopping boots and—in a move that clearly inspired the first Grand Theft Auto game seven years later—Mario could knock a Goomba out of his shoe and steal it. Once inside, Mario could squash enemies that he normally couldn't, such as Lakitu's Spinys. Until you've tried it, you have no idea how satisfying that is. ("Kuribo," in case you're wondering, is the Japanese name for a Goomba.)









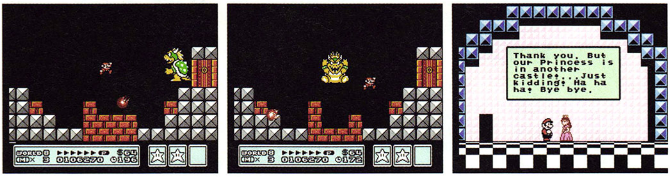


THE MARVELOUS MAP

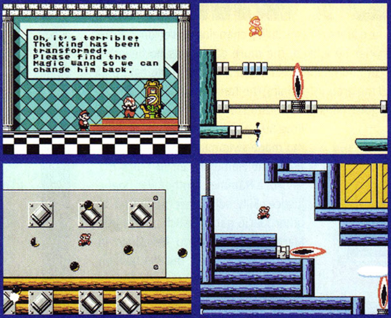
Super Mario Bros. 3 was the first game in the series to include a map screen, which added a fun new wrinkle to the gameplay. Finding your way across the world to the castle felt like an adventure in itself, with treasures, traps, and some of the catchiest Mario music we've ever hummed along to.

BOWSER'S BIG FALL

Compared to the series's only previous Bowser fight at the time, this battle was epic. Before, you simply had to reach the other side of the screen to drop the big guy into lava, but this time you had to lure him into jumping at you, and then quickly move out of the way so that he would smash a hole through the brick floor. After a few missed attacks Bowser would dig his way to his demise. Also worth noting: this was the first time Bowser sported his trademark orange hair!



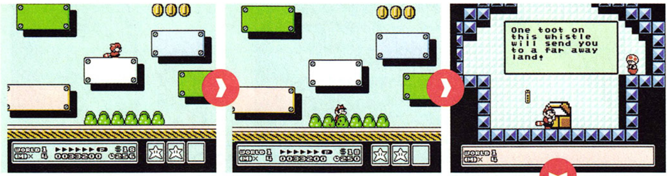
Thank you. But our Princess is in another castle!...Just kidding! Ha ha ha! Bye bye.



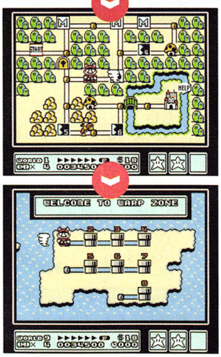
Oh, it's terrible! The King has been transformed! Please find the Magic Wand so we can change him back.

AIRSHIPS

Although the goal in each world is to reach the castle, the only thing that happens there is seeing Toad in full-on panic mode because the local king has been transformed into an animal. The real action takes place up in the clouds on the deck of a giant airship, where platforming skills are put to the ultimate test against countless cannonballs and the flying tools of Rocky Wrench. These grueling stages are infamously difficult and provide the ultimate test for Mario players.



One toot on this whistle will send you to a far away land!

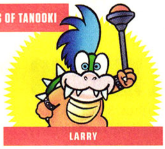


WELCOME TO WARP ZONE

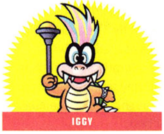
Squat on the white block in World 1-3 until you fall through, then run to the end of the stage to find the first Warp Whistle.

WARP WHISTLES

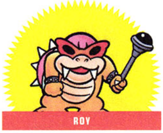
Hidden shortcuts are some of the coolest things to discover in a Mario game, and the Warp Zone in Super Mario Bros. 3 was especially well hidden. First you needed to find a Warp Whistle (of which there were three), and then you could reach the Warp Zone by playing the same tune that a similar instrument made in The Legend of Zelda. Only one whistle was needed to enter the Warp Zone, but having two whistles could skip you ahead to the very last world.



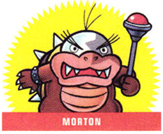
LARRY



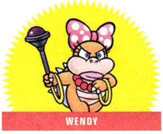
IGGY



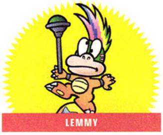
ROY



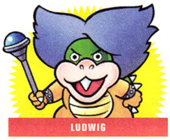
MORTON



WENDY



LEMMY



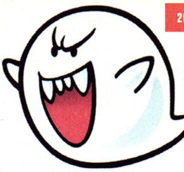
LUDWIG

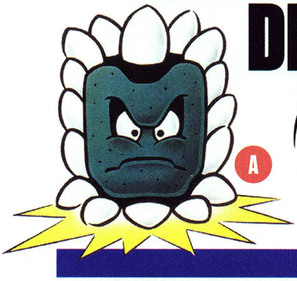
KOOPALINGS

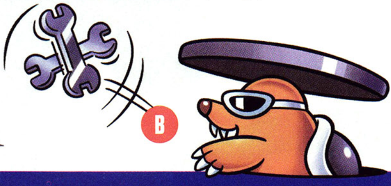
The seven Koopalings were doing dastardly deeds for Bowser when Bowser Jr. was just a gleam in the Koopa King's eye. Each Koopaling was modeled after a different member of the SMB3 design team and named after a popular musician. Their magic-wand attacks made for memorable boss battles, and their flashy personalities have endeared them to fans ever since.

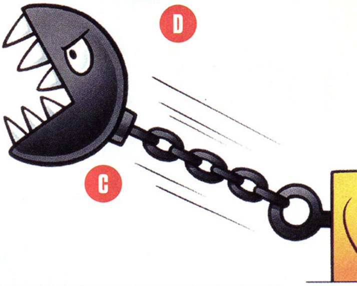
CLASSIC CHARACTER DEBUTS

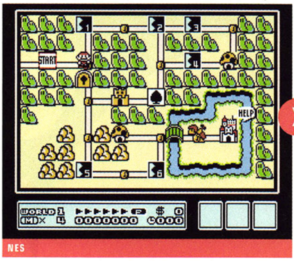
Mario-series mainstays such as Thwomps (A), Rocky Wrenches (B), Chain Chomps (C), and Boos (D) all got their start in SMB3. Chain Chomps, by the way, were based on an experience that Mario mastermind Shigeru Miyamoto had with a dog when he was young (yikes!).

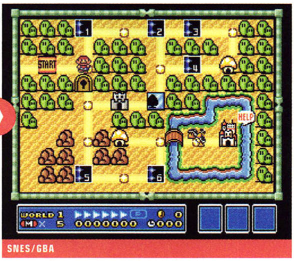

D


A


B

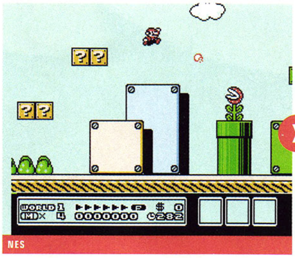

C

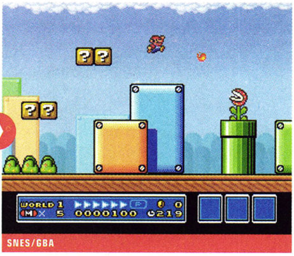

START
HELP
WORLD 1
M × 4
$ 0
NES


START
HELP
WORLD 1
M × 5
SNES/GBA

A GREAT GAME GETS EVEN BETTER

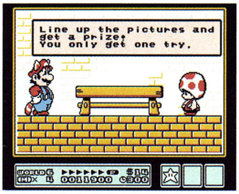
While we still love the chunky 8-bit pixel look, we concede that the Super Mario Bros. 3 remake in Super Mario All-Stars is much easier on the eyes. If you don't have and can't find the legendary Super NES collection, you might have better luck getting hold of the awkwardly titled Super Mario Advance 4: Super Mario Bros. 3 for Game Boy Advance, which is the same enhanced version of SMB3 that appears in All-Stars. Either way, the classic gameplay and updated graphics is an unbeatable match.


WORLD 1
M × 4
$ 0
0000000
282
NES

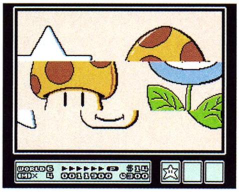

WORLD 1
M × 5
0000100
219
SNES/GBA

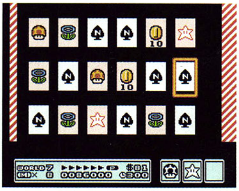
FUN AND GAMES

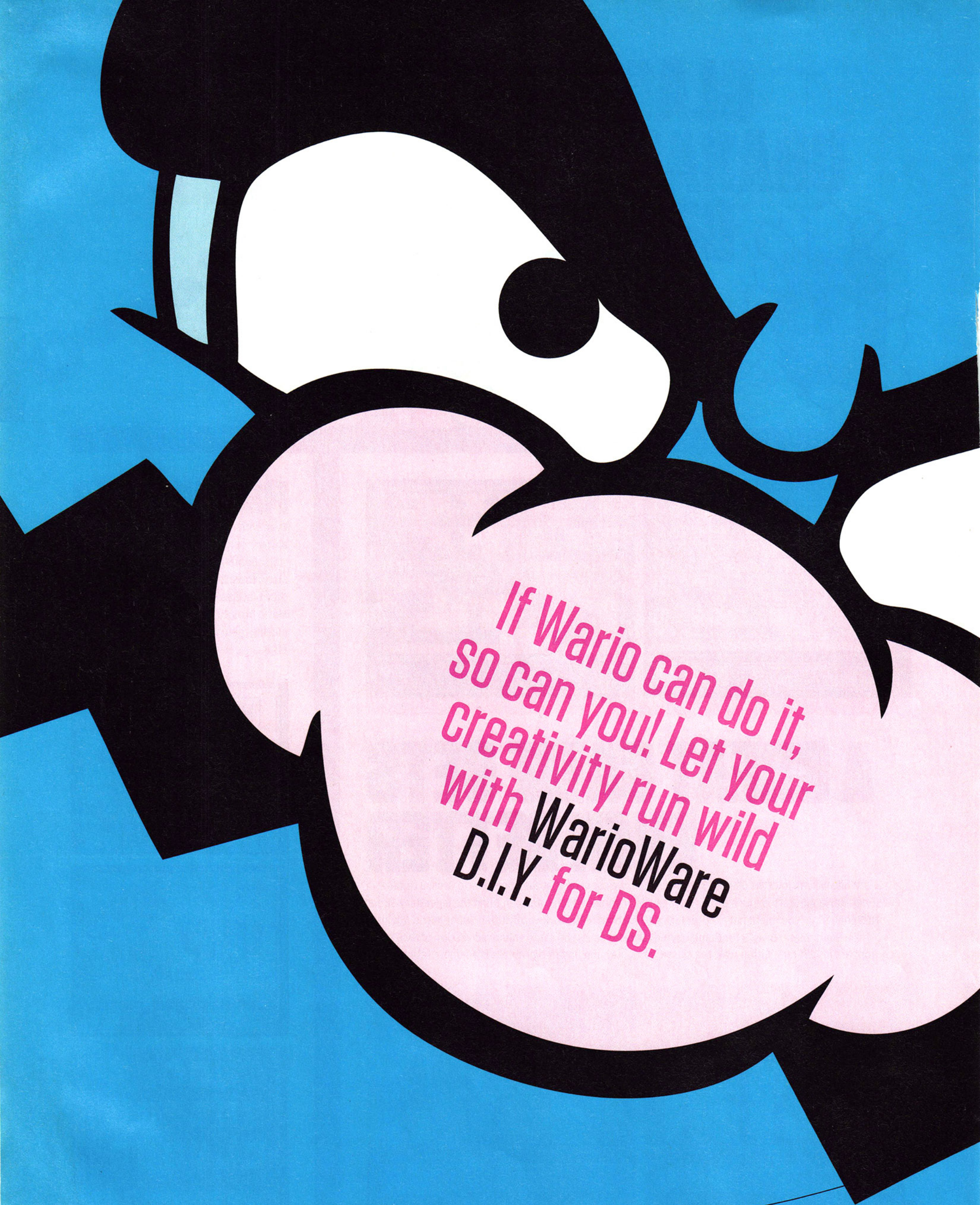
Even with multiple kingdoms in chaos, Mario always found time to try his hand at cards or slots. Bonus games had appeared in Super Mario Bros. 2 and Super Mario Land, but they played a much bigger role in Super Mario Bros. 3. The 1-Ups you could win while playing them were well worth the extra effort, especially during the tougher worlds.


Line up the pictures and get a prize! You only get one try.

WORLD 6
M × 4
$14
0011900
300


WORLD 6
M × 4
$14
0011900
300


10
10
WORLD 7
M × 8
$81
0086000
300



If Wario can do it, so can you! Let your creativity run wild with WarioWare D.I.Y. for DS.

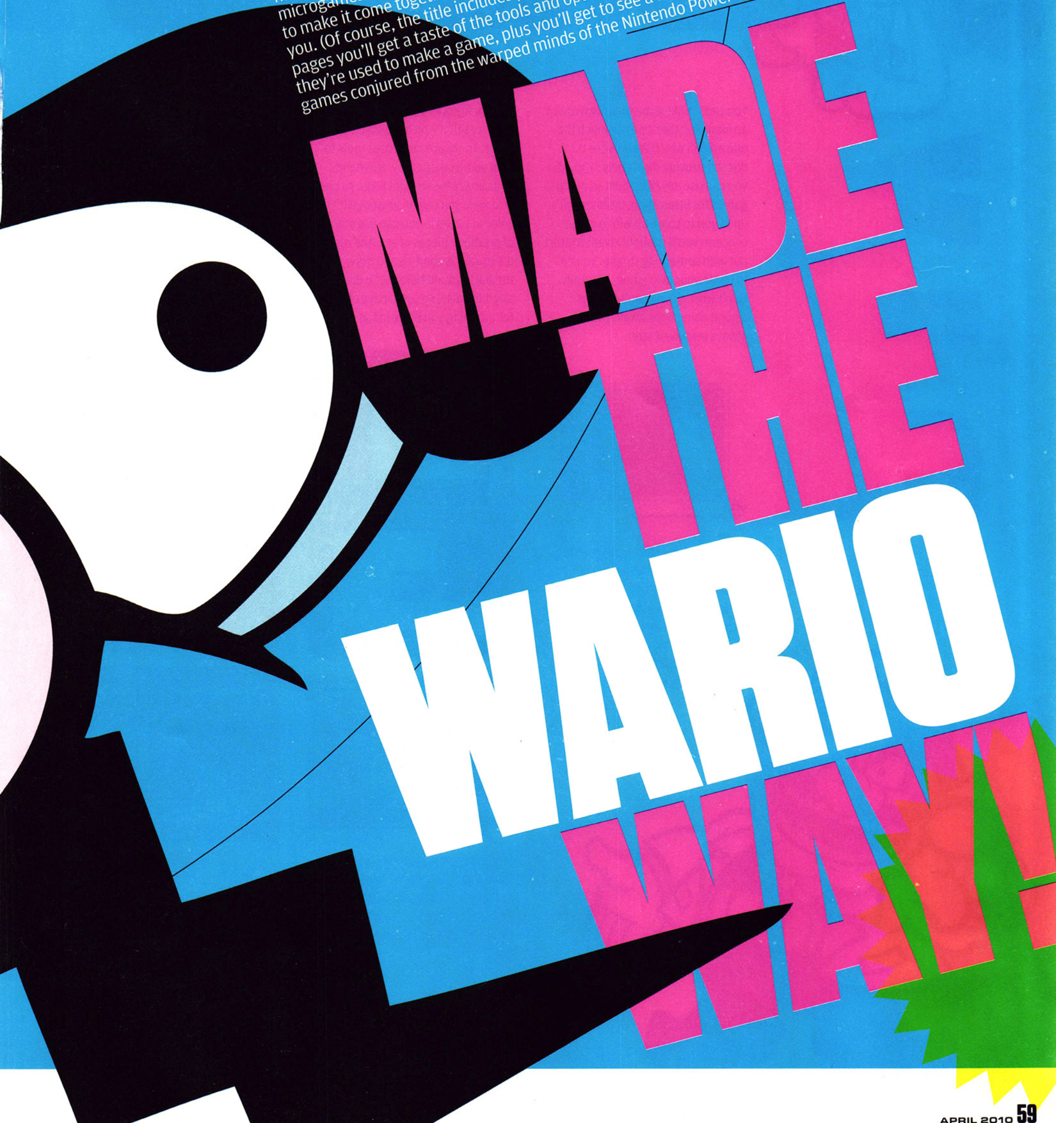
BY

PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO** DEVELOPER: **INTELLIGENT SYSTEMS** RELEASE: **MARCH 2010**

DS

MADE THE WARIO WAY!

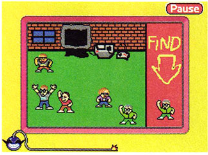
HEY, YOU! YEAH, YOU, reading the magazine! Admit it—you've always wanted to design your own video games. Sure, playing games is awesome, but creating your own? That might be even better. Well, now you'll have your chance with WarioWare D.I.Y. for the Nintendo DS handheld. This groundbreaking release has everything you need to make your own crazy, kooky, WarioWare-style microgames using Wario's Super MakerMatic 21, along with tutorials on how to make it come together. From graphics to music to gameplay, it's all up to you. (Of course, the title includes premade microgames, too.) On the following pages you'll get a taste of the tools and options at your disposal and learn how they're used to make a game, plus you'll get to see a few examples of microgames conjured from the warped minds of the Nintendo Power staff.



D.I.Y. BASICS

1. The Idea

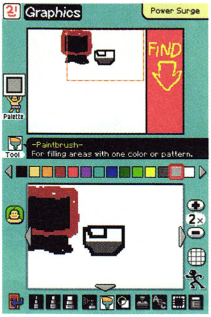
You can't make a microgame without an idea, and that's pretty much the one area in which WarioWare D.I.Y. doesn't provide direct help. Though you can use any of its built-in microgames for inspiration, ultimately it's up to you to come up with a game concept; you'll probably want to start out with something simple. You get to name your own game, naturally. Don't worry if you can't think of a good name right away; you can always rename it later.



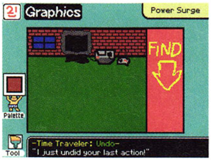
We decided to make a game about identifying a member of the Nintendo Power staff—we called it Power Surge. Players will be presented with an image of one NP crew member on the right side of the screen, and then they'll have to pick him out of the group on the left side.

2. Background

The background, of course, is the scenery upon which the game takes place. There are numerous tools to help you. You can draw freehand; you can create straight lines, circles, or boxes; you can fill an area with a color or pattern; you can use stamps of premade pieces of art; and more. It's usually a good idea to draw the background before you draw anything else, so you'll have context for anything you place in the scene.



-Paintbrush-
For filling areas with one color or pattern.

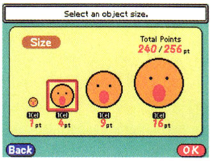


-Time Traveler: Undo-
"I just undid your last action!"

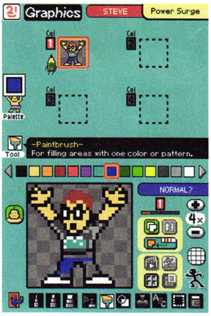
Since our game is about the Nintendo Power crew, we chose to make our background an, er, exact re-creation of the NP offices, complete with an NES hooked up to the TV.

3. Objects

Objects are any graphic elements that aren't the background, including characters or obstacles. Anything that moves or animates is also an object. As with backgrounds, you can use numerous tools to draw your objects, and you can import existing object art from other microgames. Objects come in four sizes, and each object can have four "states" (standing, jumping, or running, for example), each with four frames of animation.



Select an object size.



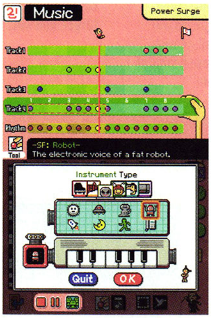
-Paintbrush-
For filling areas with one color or pattern.

The most important objects in our microgame are the pictures of the NP crew; to create them, we zoomed in on the art as much as possible and drew each character pixel by pixel. We also made a special sign that appears when you win or lose the game.

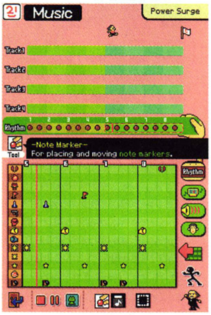
NEXT UP: STAFF GAMES!

4. Music

With WarioWare D.I.Y.'s full-fledged music-creation tool, you can create up to four individual tracks of sound, plus a fifth rhythm track, to make your own melodies. Luckily, if you aren't musically inclined, there are several options for automatic music creation.


Music
Power Surge
Track1
Track2
Track3
Track4
Rhythm
Tool
Instrument Type
Quit
OK

-SF: Robot-
The electronic voice of a fat robot.

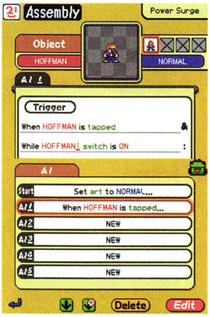

Music
Power Surge
Track1
Track2
Track3
Track4
Rhythm
Tool

-Note Marker-
For placing and moving note markers.

We went ahead and had Nintendo Power's resident designer/maestro, Chris Imlay, compose a ditty for us. Using the music creator is as simple as placing notes at the desired time and pitch, and there are several musical instruments to choose from.

5. AI

In most games AI refers to artificial intelligence, but in WarioWare D.I.Y. it stands for *action instructions*. Either way, they're the behind-the-scenes commands that tell every object in the game how to behave. Each object has a starting command that determines what it's doing at the beginning of the microgame. You can add numerous additional commands by designating triggers (such as tapping the object) and the actions that follow (such as an animation or a movement).


Assembly
Power Surge
Object
HOFFMAN
NORMAL
AI 1
Trigger
AI
Delete
Edit

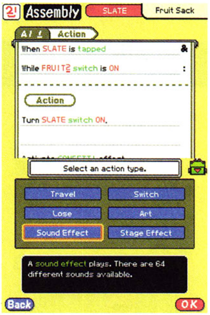
When HOFFMAN is tapped &
While HOFFMAN1 switch is ON :

Start Set art to NORMAL...
AI1 When HOFFMAN is tapped...
AI2 NEW
AI3 NEW
AI4 NEW
AI5 NEW

We commanded all of the NP characters to appear at a random location on the left side of the screen. We also made duplicates of the characters and instructed one of them to appear randomly on the right side of the screen so players will know which one they're searching for (more on that technique later). As for the win/loss sign, we instructed it to be invisible until someone wins or loses the game. Speaking of wins and losses, you have to set the win conditions or no one will be able to beat the game. In our case, we made it so the player wins when he touches the NP character on the left side of the screen that matches the one on the right side.

6. Sound Effects

Sound effects are actually part of AI, since they're triggered when an action occurs onscreen, but they deserve special mention. A well-chosen sound effect can really bring your microgame to life. The game includes 64 sound effects (eight sounds in eight categories), ranging from human yells to animal sounds to NES-style Mario effects.

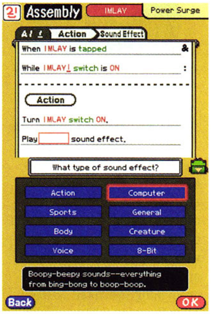

Assembly
SLATE
Fruit Sack
AI 1
Action
Travel
Switch
Lose
Art
Sound Effect
Stage Effect
Back
OK

When SLATE is tapped &
While FRUIT2 switch is ON :

Turn SLATE switch ON.

Select an action type.

A sound effect plays. There are 64 different sounds available.


Assembly
IMLAY
Power Surge
AI 1
Action
Sound Effect
Action
Computer
Sports
General
Body
Creature
Voice
8-Bit
Back
OK

When IMLAY is tapped &
While IMLAY1 switch is ON :

Turn IMLAY switch ON.
Play sound effect.

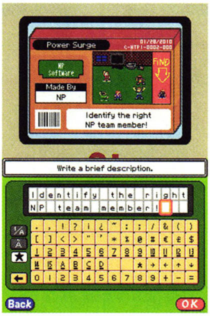
What type of sound effect?

Boopy-beepy sounds--everything from bing-bong to boop-boop.

For our game, we decided to trigger a congratulatory ding when the correct character is chosen, and a negative buzz otherwise.

7. Finishing Touches

Once everything is set up it's time to hit the Finish button and ship your creation to the in-game virtual store! You'll get to write a short hint that tells players what to do when the microgame begins (it could be as simple as "Tap!" or "Find!"), plus you'll write a description of what your microgame is about. You'll even get to pick a cartridge shape, color, and logo to personalize how the game will look on the shelf. Play it, enjoy it, show it to friends—then start thinking about your next microgame!


Power Surge
01/28/2010
C-HTP1-0002-000
NP Software
FIND
Back
OK

Made By: NP

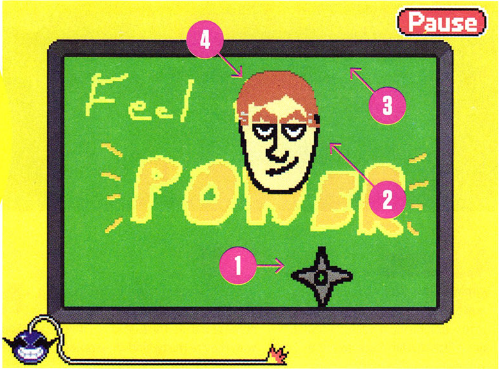
Identify the right NP team member!

Write a brief description.

Identify the right NP team member!

Jealous of being left out of Power Surge, the floating disembodied head of former NP staffer Chris Shepperd invaded my microgame. Naturally, you have to fight back with the only implement at your disposal, a ninja throwing star. As Shepperd's head moves back and forth along the top of the screen, you must launch the randomly placed throwing star upward by tapping it at the right time. If you hit him, Shepperd will be seeing stars in more ways than one. But if you miss, he blasts you with a beam from his cyborg eye (which has happened to only a few NP writers in real life).

CHRIS H.'S GAME: SHEPPERD?!


Pause
Feel
POWER
4
3
2
1

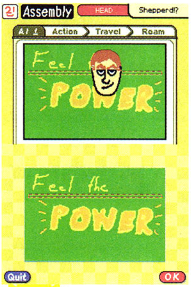
① The throwing star appears at a random location on the lower part of the screen. Tap the throwing star to hurl it.

② Shepperd's disembodied head moves back and forth across the screen.

③ If the star misses and goes off the edge of the screen, Shepperd will retaliate with his eye beams of doom.

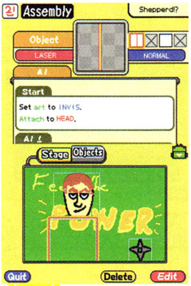
④ When the throwing star makes contact with its target, you win.

CHRIS H.'S GAME-MAKING TIPS!


Assembly
HEAD
Shepperd!?
AI 1
Action
Travel
Roam
Feel
POWER
Feel the
POWER
Quit
OK

Tip 1

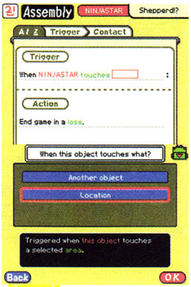
BACK AND FORTH There's no AI command to make an object move back and forth in a straight line, but there's an easy way to make it happen. When selecting an action for an object, tell the object to move by roaming within an area, then set the movement boundary as a thin line. With such tight constraints, the object will simply move back and forth.


Assembly
Shepperd!?
Object
LASER
NORMAL
AI
Start
AI 1
Stage
Objects
Quit
Delete
Edit

Set art to INVIS.
Attach to HEAD.

Tip 2

COMBINING OBJECTS There's a limit to how big an object can be, so it takes some graphic trickery to make Shepperd unleash his eye beam. The lower half of the beam is a separate object, which is attached to the head. It's invisible when the game starts, but if you miss and the head changes to its beam-firing animation, the lower beam becomes visible and gives the appearance that the blast reaches the bottom of the play field. The tough part is making the two objects line up properly.


Assembly
NINJASTAR
Shepperd!?
AI 2
Trigger
Contact
Trigger
Action
When this object touches what?
Another object
Location
Back
OK

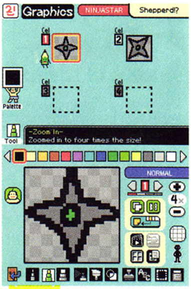
When NINJASTAR touches :

End game in a loss.

Triggered when this object touches a selected area.

Tip 3

CROSS THE LINE You can cause actions to occur when an object touches a certain area of the background. In this case, the game notices when the throwing star touches anywhere along the upper edge of the play field without hitting Shepperd's head first. When this happens, the game acknowledges that your throw has missed, which activates the losing animation.


Graphics
NINJASTAR
Shepperd!?
Cel 1
Cel 2
Cel 3
Cel 4
Palette
Tool
NORMAL
1
4×

-Zoom In-
Zoomed in to four times the size!

Tip 4

HOLE IN ONE? It might seem obvious, but the game will recognize a tap on an object only if you touch a part of the object that's been drawn in. That's usually for the best, but if you've got an object with a hole in it—like the ninja star—that can cause trouble. During the fine-tuning of the game, I discovered that sometimes a tap would hit the hole in the center, and that wouldn't register as touching the star. To fix the problem, I filled in the hole with the same green color as the background. It still looked like it had a hole, and you could tap there, too.

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- RPGFan.com

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"Unforgettable Memories"
art book!!

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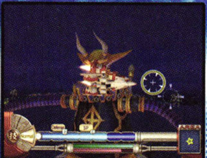
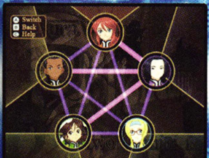
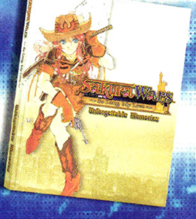
Ah, thank heavens! I'm finally someplace familiar again!







TEEN T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Fantasy Violence
Language
Sexual Themes

PS2 PlayStation 2 Wii™ RED ENTERTAINMENT NIS America

www.NISAmerica.com

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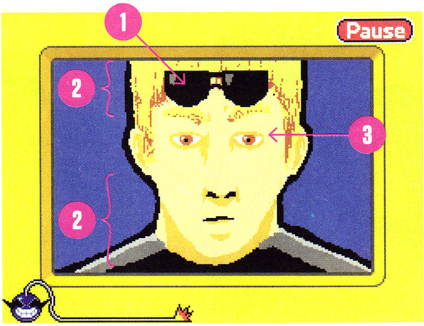
Combining my admiration for Resident Evil badass Albert Wesker and my fascination with thespian David Caruso's performance in *CSI: Miami*, microgame Cool Albert is all about getting sunglasses over Wesker's eyes. The sunglasses stop moving up and down over his face only when you tap on them, so you have to get the timing just right. Succeed, and Wesker rewards you with a smile; fail, and you incur his wrath. (Those who have played the Resident Evil games know that the latter is serious business.)

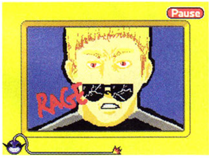
JUSTIN C.'S GAME: COOL ALBERT

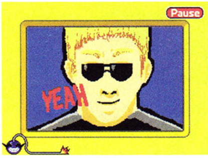


① The sunglasses move up and down on the screen. Tapping on the spectacles makes them stop.

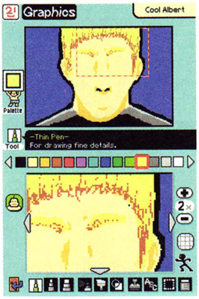
② If you stop the sunglasses in these areas, they'll break, Wesker's face will fill with rage, and you'll lose the game.

③ Get the sunglasses over the eyes, and you win!





JUSTIN C.'S GAME-MAKING TIPS!

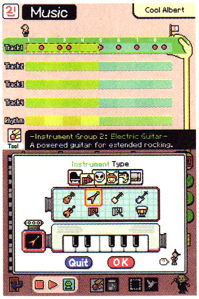


-Thin Pen-
For drawing fine details.

Tip 1

IN THE BACKGROUND

Because objects can be only a certain size, and because each object consumes points from your 256-point total (the smallest objects are 1 point and the largest are 16, not accounting for frames of animation that also require points), I decided to draw most of my character as the background. I didn't draw the entire figure this way, though, because it would make the character too static; to give Wesker life, I made smaller objects that can animate. The eyes, for example, blink periodically and turn red when you lose, and the mouth can transform from a neutral position to smiling (when you win) or baring teeth (when you lose).

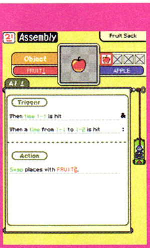


-Instrument Group 2: Electric Guitar-
A powered guitar for extended rocking.

Tip 2

HAPPY HUMMING

Even if you don't have musical talent, you can create your own music using WarioWare D.I.Y.'s humming recorder. Simply hum into the microphone on the DS, and your humming will be translated into notes. Just make sure you hum pretty loudly, as I had some difficulty getting a song to record when I hummed at a more natural volume. (Additionally, I couldn't get the game to record anything other than humming for some reason. I tried some singing and whistling, as well as both The Who's "Won't Get Fooled Again" and Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata," and nothing other than humming seemed to work.) Once you're happy with your recording, you can change the musical instrument that plays the notes. Since I wanted my song to have a rock-'n'-roll feel, I went with an electric guitar, but the game offers a wide array of instruments.

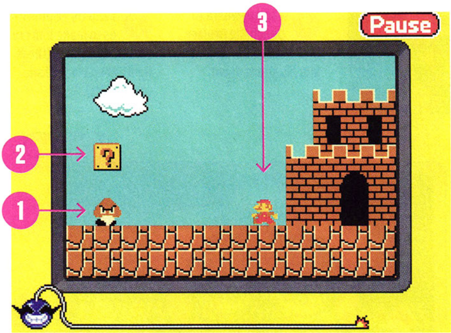


When time 1-1 is hit &
When a time from 1-1 to 1-2 is hit

Swap places with FRUIT2.

ADVANCED TIP: RANDOMIZE IT!

Making something appear at a *random location* is easy, but displaying a *random object* is a bit tricky. Let's say you want to make an apple, a banana, or a pear appear in the middle of the screen. First, place one of the objects at the target location, and place the others off to the side, outside the visible playfield. Second, create action instructions for each object so that within a random time during the first split-second of the game (from time 1-1 to time 1-2), the objects swap places. For example, the apple swaps places with the banana, the banana swaps with the pear, and the pear swaps with the apple. Because the order in which the position swaps occur is random, the effect will be a random object appearing on the screen.



① Tapping the Goomba will make him jump and hit the ? Block.

② When struck, the ? Block fires a Bullet Bill. The projectile makes a beeline for Mario, and the subsequent explosion sends the plumber flying. You win and the Goomba's family can rest easy.

③ If Mario should reach the Goomba before getting blasted, he'll deliver a swift kick of doom. The Goomba will cry out as the mustachioed reign of terror continues unabated.

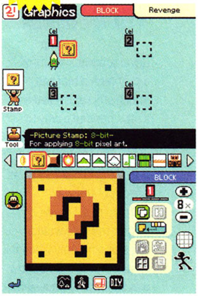
STEVE T.'S GAME: REVENGE

I don't possess quite the illustrative talents of my colleagues (my drawings would make your average preschooler look like Michelangelo), so I knew I'd have to rely on the premade sprites that come on the game card. But what I lack in artistic skills, I try to make up for with a strong sense of empathy. Hence, the humble Goomba finally gets his chance at revenge after more than 20 years of abuse at the feet of a certain plumber. As Mario approaches, you simply tap his long-beleaguered rival to unleash retribution in the form of a mustache-seeking Bullet Bill.

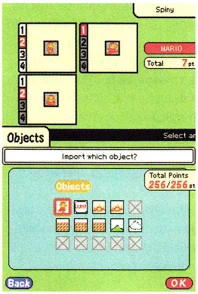
STEVE T.'S GAME-MAKING TIPS!

Tip 1

8-BIT BORROWING Quite a few classic Mario sprites—including the Goomba, the ? Block, and the castle—are offered as picture stamps, which are readily available from both the background- and object-creation screens. There's also a stamp for the plumber himself, but it's not animated, and Mario would look pretty goofy if he just slid across the screen. Fortunately, you can import animated objects from any of the premade microgames, and one of them includes Mario complete with running animation. You'll find a number of stamps and microgames from other classic Nintendo titles, as well, including The Legend of Zelda, Metroid, and Kid Icarus.


Graphics
BLOCK
Revenge
Cel 1
Cel 2
Cel 3
Cel 4
Stamp
Tool
BLOCK
8×
DIY

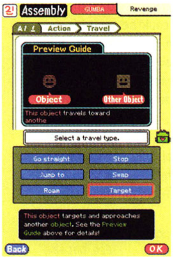
-Picture Stamp: 8-bit-
For applying 8-bit pixel art.


Spiny
MARIO
Total 7 pt
Objects
Select ar
Total Points 256/256 pt
Objects
Back
OK

Import which object?

Tip 2

GOOMBAS CAN'T JUMP Believe it or not, one of the trickiest parts of the game's design was getting the Goomba to jump. The action isn't built into the software, so it requires a couple of steps to fake the effect.

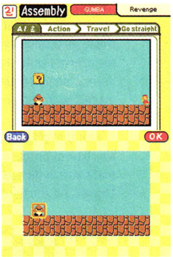

Assembly
GUMBA
Revenge
AI 1
Action
Travel
Preview Guide
Object
Other Object
Go straight
Stop
Jump to
Swap
Roam
Target
Back
OK

This object travels toward anothe

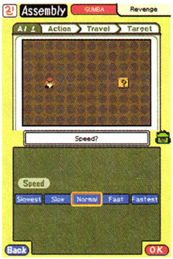
Select a travel type.

This object targets and approaches another object. See the Preview Guide above for details!

Ⓐ When directing an object's movement, you can have it approach another object. In this case, when the Goomba is tapped, we'll have it move up toward the ? Block.


Assembly
GUMBA
Revenge
AI 2
Action
Travel
Go straight
Back
OK

Ⓑ The second step is triggered when the Goomba touches the block. If you simply instruct him to move straight down after he touches it, however, he'll keep going down until he's off the screen. Instead, we have to point him to a specific location—the ground directly beneath the block.

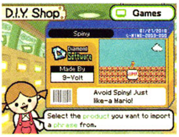

Assembly
GUMBA
Revenge
AI 1
Action
Travel
Target
Speed
Slowest
Slow
Normal
Fast
Fastest
Back
OK

Speed?

Ⓒ Setting the movement speed to Normal for both steps makes for the most natural-looking jump.

Tip 3

CLASSIC TUNES In addition to objects, you can import the music track from any of the premade microgames. Naturally, I went with the classic Super Mario Bros. theme.

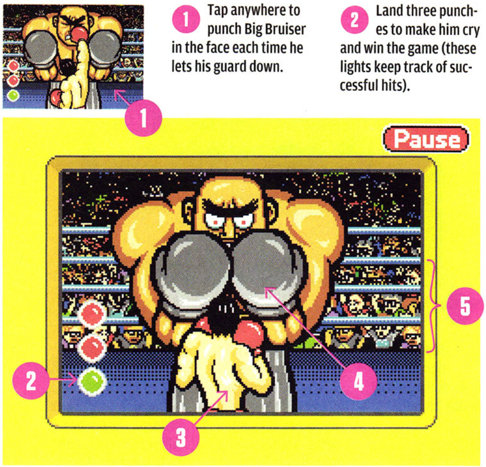

D.I.Y. Shop
Games
Spiny
01/21/2010
Diamond Software
Made By
9-Volt

Avoid Spiny! Just like-a Mario!

Select the product you want to import a phrase from.

CHRIS S.'S GAME: FUNKY BOXING

Big Bruiser, the champion of the ULTNPWVGBC (Unnecessarily Long-Titled Nintendo Power World Video Game Boxing Circuit), has never been defeated. In fact, he often boasts that he's never even been hit three times in a single round! As a promising young ULTNPWVGBC rookie, you have a once-in-a-lifetime chance to end Bruiser's streak and get a little payback for his previous victims in the ring—Shaky Slate, Chain-Gang Cheng, Crazy-Eyes Imlay, Terrible Thomason, and Howitzer Hoffman—all of whom cheer you on from ringside. Just three punches stand between you and boxing history!



① Tap anywhere to punch Big Bruiser in the face each time he lets his guard down.

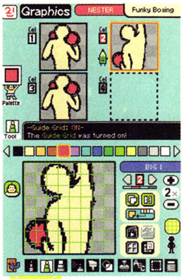
② Land three punches to make him cry and win the game (these lights keep track of successful hits).

③ Your boxer bobs in place while you wait for an opening to strike.

④ You fail instantly if any of your punches are blocked.

⑤ The NP crew makes a cameo appearance!

CHRIS S.'S GAME-MAKING TIPS!



-Guide Grid: ON-
The Guide Grid was turned on!

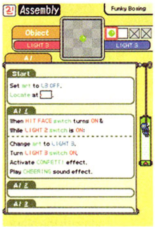
Tip 1 ROUGH IT OUT

I wasn't sure how to build my game when I started it, so there was a chance that, as I made adjustments during development, I would have to redraw my artwork. To avoid wasting time, I made the game using very crude sketches and then redrew the art as the very last step. I was careful to make the sketches the right proportions so that I wouldn't have to rework object placement or AI once the final art was done.

Tip 2 MULTIPLE OBJECTIVES

It would have been easiest to set the game so that it could be won with a single successful punch, but I wanted the action to be more involved than that. I doubled the normal amount of time for a microgame and made it so that it took three hits to win, which was tricky to do.

I set the lights to watch the face's AI switch, which turns on when you land a punch. When that switch is flipped, the first light turns green. The second and third green lights watch not only the switch assigned to the face, but also the switches of the lights themselves; each successive light turns green only if the previous one has been activated. The game knows the player has won when the third green light appears.

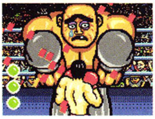


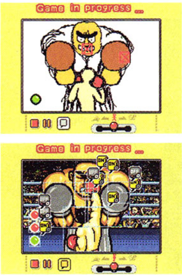
Start
Set art to L3 OFF.
Locate at ☐.

AI 1
When HIT FACE switch turns ON &
While LIGHT 2 switch is ON:
Change art to LIGHT 3.
Turn LIGHT 3 switch ON.
Activate CONFETTI effect.
Play CHEERING sound effect.

AI 2

AI 3





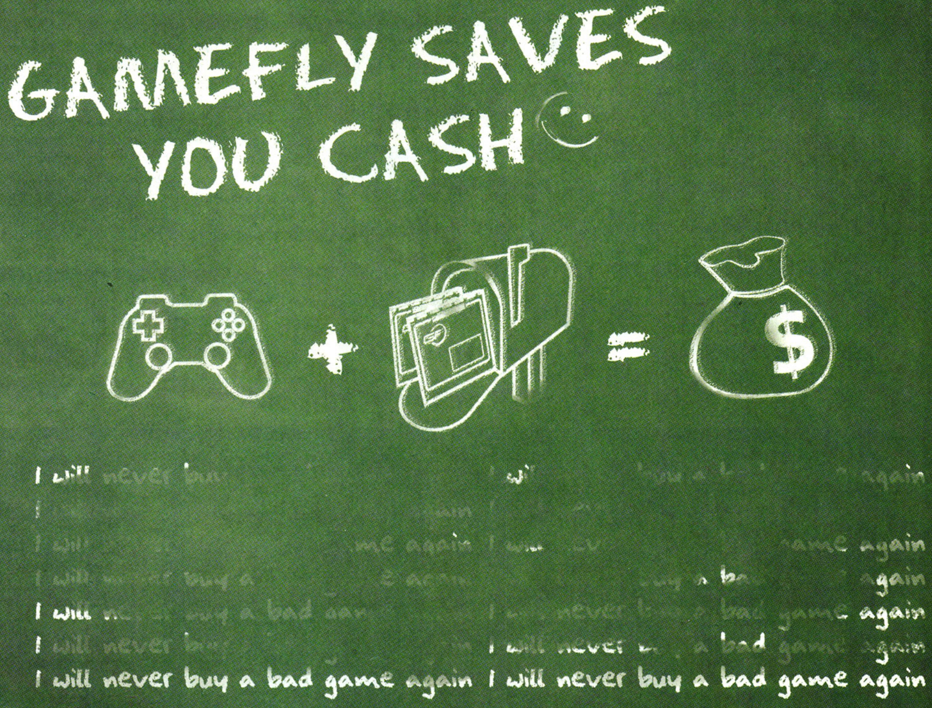
Tip 3 ADVANCED SWITCHES

During development I ran into a problem: a blocked punch still registered as a hit. I needed a way to tell the game that a punch connects with the face only if Big Bruiser's gloves are out of the way.

To do this, I made it so that the face would register a hit only when its AI switch was on. But how was the face to know when to turn on or off? I placed a small box beside Big Bruiser that his right arm would touch when he opened his guard. When touched, the box's switch turned on, which in turn told the face's switch to activate. So, the face was only punchable when Big Bruiser's arms were open. But there was a new problem: after the first punch, the face remained hittable because its switch stayed on.

To fix this problem, I created a second hit box that the right arm would touch when it returned to its blocking position. Touching this box turned the first hit box's switch off so that the entire process would reset every time the Bruiser opened and closed his guard.

During testing I drew red *X*s through the two hit boxes so that I could see and adjust them. Later I traced the background onto them so they would appear invisible (I couldn't leave them blank because the arms would have nothing to connect with).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Wii
ALICE IN WONDERLAND
NINTENDO DS
POKéMON HEARTGOLD

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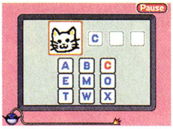
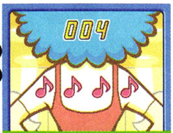
But Wait! THERE'S MORE!

Believe it or not, making microgames is only a part of WarioWare D.I.Y. Check out what else the game has to offer.

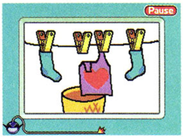

Pause
C
A B C
E M O
T W X



PREMADE MICROGAMES

WarioWare D.I.Y. comes with dozens of microgames already included. As in past WarioWare titles, wacky characters like Mona and 9-Volt each bring their own uniquely themed assortment of microgames. The microgames run the gamut of zaniness—you might find yourself squeezing toothpaste from its tube; participating in a game of baseball or table tennis; picking a specific person out of a crowd; milking a cow; or playing a microgame based on a Nintendo classic such as Metroid, Super Mario Bros., or Urban Champion. Playing the microgames is fun, but they're also an invaluable resource: you can see how they're assembled to gain insight into making your own games.

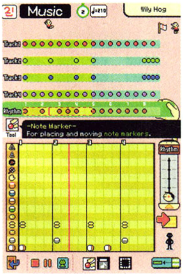
Pause
Again!



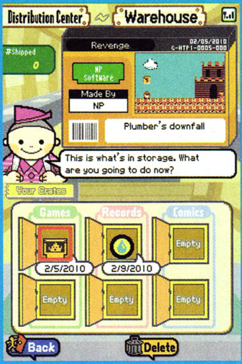
Record
MakerMatic
©20XX CRYGOR LABS

RECORD MAKERMATIC

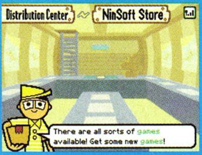
Records? What are those? Oh yeah, those black circular things that existed before CDs and MP3s. Well, regardless of what it's called, the Record MakerMatic lets you compose songs that are 24 times longer than those you can compose for microgames. There's no maestro to help you, but you can import musical phrases from microgames or other records. The more time you spend with WarioWare D.I.Y., the more premade records you'll acquire.


Music
♩=210
Wily Hog
Track1
Track2
Track3
Track4
Rhythm
Tool
Rhythm

-Note Marker-
For placing and moving note markers.


Distribution Center
Warehouse
#Shipped
0
Revenge
02/05/2010
C-HTP1-0005-000
NP Software
Made By
NP
Plumber's downfall
Your Crates
Games
Records
Comics
2/5/2010
2/9/2010
Empty
Empty
Empty
Empty
Back
Delete

This is what's in storage. What are you going to do now?


Distribution Center
NinSoft Store

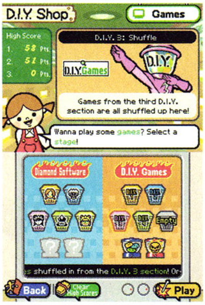
There are all sorts of games available! Get some new games!

DISTRIBUTION CENTER

The Distribution Center is the icing on the WarioWare D.I.Y. cake. It lets you wirelessly connect to friends, to the online community, or to WarioWare D.I.Y. Showcase for WiiWare, and share everything you've created. You can exchange microgames, comics, and records with other D.I.Y. users via the Warehouse, and you can download additional microgames or enter special design challenges in the NinSoft Store. As long as there are creative gamers out there, there will be new content to enjoy. We can't wait to see what people come up with!

THE GAME BLENDER

The Game Blender lets you play an assortment of microgames in random order. In fact, you must experience the premade microgames in the Game Blender before you can play them at your leisure. You can also pour an entire virtual shelf's worth of custom-made games into the blender (you can arrange the shelves beforehand) to make your own personalized mixes.


D.I.Y. Shop
Games
D.I.Y. 3: Shuffle
D.I.Y. Games
D.I.Y.
Diamond Software
D.I.Y. Games
Empty
Back
Clear High Scores
Play

High Score
1. 58 Pts.
2. 51 Pts.
3. 0 Pts.

Games from the third D.I.Y. section are all shuffled up here!

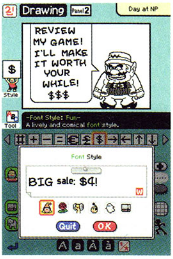
Wanna play some games? Select a stage!

es shuffled in from the D.I.Y. 3 section! Or

Comic
MakerMatic
©20XX CRYGOR LABS

COMIC MAKERMATIC

The Comic MakerMatic is just what it sounds like—it enables you to make your own four-panel comic strips. Although the comics are black-and-white only, you otherwise have all the same tools you do when drawing game graphics, plus there are additional character stamps and word-bubble tools. The subject matter, of course, is entirely up to you—funny, scary, or action-packed, it's your call. The game also includes many premade comics, and you can share the ones you make with friends.


Drawing
Panel 2
Day at NP
REVIEW MY GAME! I'LL MAKE IT WORTH YOUR WHILE! $$$
$
Style
Tool
Font Style
Quit
OK

-Font Style: Fun-
A lively and comical font style.

BIG sale: $4!

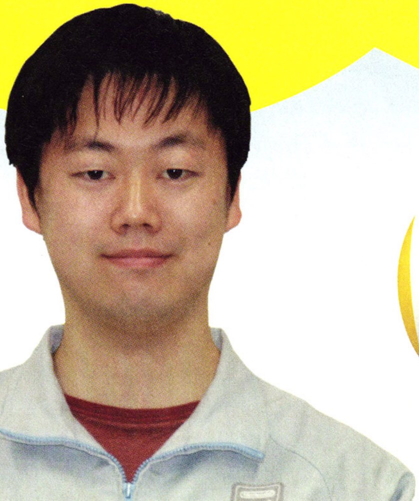
IF THEY ASK, JUST BLAME IT ON YOUR UPBRINGING

games
radar.
MORE KICKS PER CLICK

Where did the Propeller Suit come from? Why is Bowser so big? Will the Super Guide return? Discover the answers to these questions and more with the director of New Super Mario Bros. Wii.

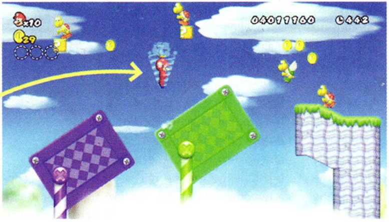
PLUMBING the DEPTHS

With Shigeyuki Asuke



We reviewed New Super Mario Bros. Wii just a few issues ago, but in the short time since then, the game has rocketed to heights that even the red-capped Mario faithful here at NP wouldn't have predicted, with worldwide sales of 10 million copies and counting. And if you're like us, your fun has continued long after dunking Bowser in a pool of hot lava. With challenging Star Coins to collect, a supertough bonus world to conquer, and the lasting appeal of multiplayer Coin Battles, New Super Mario Bros. Wii should keep the Nintendo faithful busy for quite some time.

With mushrooms still on our minds, we talked with Shigeyuki Asuke, the director of New Super Mario Bros. Wii, about players' reactions to the game, the genesis of its biggest new features, the influence of Super Mario Bros. 3, and more. Those who have yet to beat the game may want to save this article for later to avoid spoilers, but for those of you who rescued the princess, let's-a go!



NINTENDO POWER **How did the ideas for the Penguin and Propeller Suits come about?**

SHIGEYUKI ASUKE We brainstormed many ideas for abilities and finally chose those two. We'd also considered abilities such as using a vehicle to fly around freely, or operations performed by tilting the Wii Remote controller. Ultimately, though, we narrowed our criteria down to simple operations that could be easily understood by anyone, and abilities that would broaden the gameplay and make it more enjoyable. As a result, we decided to make the game's main items ones that would not only let the player freeze the enemy with ice balls and use simple operations to fly through the sky, but would also expand gameplay with functions such as being able to slide on ice and swim freely through water.

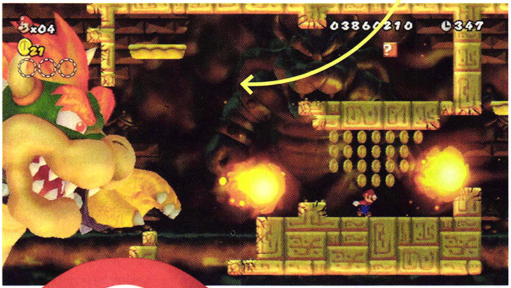
The final battle against Bowser is epic! Why was it decided to make the fight more like a platforming stage instead of the usual one-screen battle? Also, Bowser seems a bit scarier than he has been in other recent games; was it a goal to present him as more of a threat?

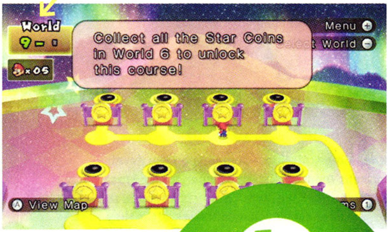
We'd decided that, in order to leave a real "last-boss" impression, we'd have a giant Bowser who was clearly much larger than the previous bosses that appear, and that, at the very end, you'd stomp on a switch and defeat Bowser by taking the floor out from under him. Then we came up with a setting where the giant Bowser was able to break through walls or the floor to attack. Based on those elements, if the screen had been a fixed, conventional "one-screen," the field would have been too narrow, so we turned to a scrolling-platform stage composition.

The hair and eye colors of that last giant Bowser are different from his usual colors, and we tried to make him huge and forceful for the dramatic impact. I think that's probably why it seemed scarier.

World 9 is one of the best bonuses we've ever seen in a game. In what ways did the team approach the design of those stages differently from those in the normal worlds?

We created a new course for players who'd cleared the game, as an element that would allow them to play even after they'd cleared the rest. And, since it's a course meant for players who've already cleared everything, we made it hard enough that they'd really want to take it on, but to be fun at the same time. We set the difficulty level high to make



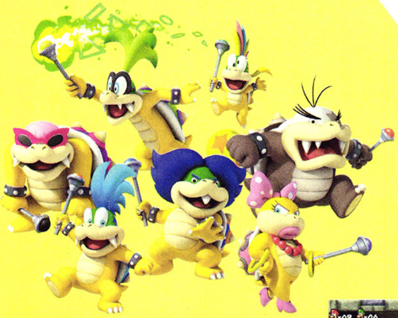

Collect all the Star Coins in World 6 to unlock this course!

[Left] Best Bowser battle ever?

it suitable for players who'd gotten all the star coins on their way through the game.

At first, performing Mario's spin move while jumping doesn't appear to do much, but the extra little bit of air time can be important, can't it? What was the full reason behind including this move?

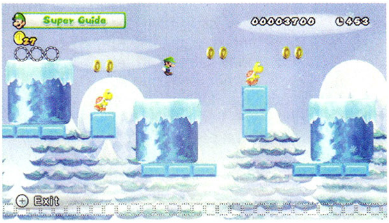
A goal for this game was to introduce features that made use of the Wii Remote controller, so we designed it so that you can make the character spin at any time with the simplest operation: shaking the remote. If you can spin whenever you want by shaking the Wii Remote, it naturally segues into Propeller Mario being able to fly as the propeller spins. Then, there's a feeling of wanting to spin during jumps, as well. In order to respond to that feeling, we tried making it so that, if you shake the remote while the character is in the air, he hangs up there a bit longer. This operation had an extremely good feel to it, so we decided to introduce it as a play element.



Koopalings, Airships—someone on the development team really loves Super Mario Bros. 3, don't they? Why was the decision made to bring these classic elements back after they hadn't been seen for so long? What do you feel they add to the game?

We thought the Koopalings would provide a nice touch of nostalgia for the people who played the Mario series a long time ago, and I think that—for those who have played Super Mario Bros. 3—the Koopalings and Airships are a set. In Super Mario Bros. 3 we decided to have the Koopalings ride on the Airships, but this time we put Bowser Jr. on them and used him to advance the game as a whole by being a sort of leader for the Koopalings.

With Bowser Jr. enlisting the aid of Koopalings and Airships, is there any doubt the developers are big fans of Super Mario Bros. 3?



It seems as though players have endlessly discussed and debated the Super Guide. What do you think of their feedback, and how do you feel the feature turned out?

Up until the game's release, we couldn't properly communicate exactly how the Super Guide worked. Now that people have actually used it, we're getting very favorable responses. Among beginning gamers in particular, there are some who previously came up against courses they just couldn't clear, were unable to advance farther, and gave up on beating the game when they were only partway through. But, thanks to the Super Guide function, even those people are now able to advance to later stages; we've heard many stories like that. There also seem to be lots of people who try to clear the stages under their own steam after they watch Luigi's guide.

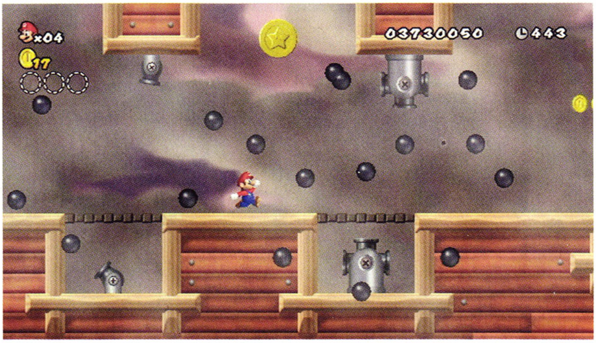
Then, for advanced players, there's a hidden element: if they complete the game without causing the Super Guide block to appear, the final star on their save file shines. Many people have told us that they always try to play that first time through without using the Super Guide block. It creates a feeling of tension for them, and they begin to play very seriously.

Some information about the Super Guide got out before the game went on sale, causing some people to form opinions about being able to advance even if you hadn't cleared the level. Still, since it is a game that's overwhelmingly fun to play and clear under your own power, people do play the courses and try to clear them on their own, rather than messing up on purpose and using the block. I think players understand that everybody can be happy about this system.

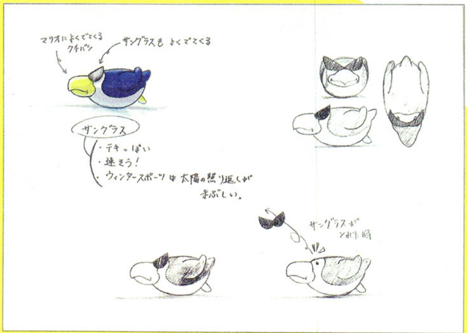
Once the multiplayer functionality was in the game, did anything about it surprise you? For example, did players approach it any differently than you had anticipated, or did you perhaps see any actions or strategies you hadn't planned on?

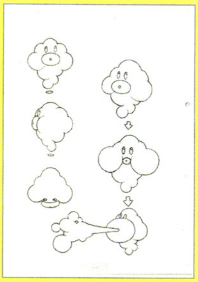
With the older 2-D Mario games, people had positively begged for the ability to have several players play the same course, so many of the staff members had big expectations for this. When we put the feature into the game and the staff played it, everyone seemed to enjoy it even more than they'd expected to.

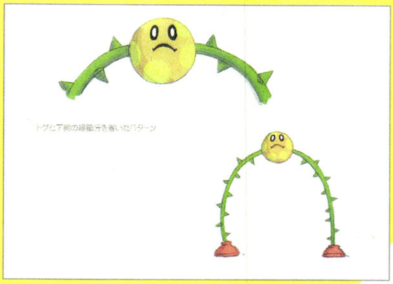
The abilities and personal relationships of the people who play together bring about new approaches, so there are lots of different playing styles. For example, if players are cooperating to advance, sometimes they'll give items to each other, or do absolutely everything they can to get just one person past a hard place, even having the other players get into bubbles. Then, there are



These rare design sketches show the development of characters that make their debut in New Super Mario Bros. Wii. (Man, that penguin gives us bad flashbacks to World 9-5....)


マリオによくでてくるクチバシ
サングラスもよくでてくる
サングラス
・テキっぽい
・速そう!
・ウィンタースポーツは太陽の照り返しがまぶしい。
サングラスがとれた時




トゲと下側の緑部分を省いたパターン

some people who will pick a player up and advance that way. I think that's what makes it really interesting: the fact that the approach changes depending on the people who are playing.

Having said that, lots of things popped up that were even more interesting than I'd expected. I thought that some people would get on top of other players to reach the Star Coins that are hard to get when playing alone, but some people actually *threw* the other player to get coins that were over holes and hard to reach. Not only that, but unexpected ways of playing were produced, such as several players cooperating to clear levels without using the lifts, as in the Super Skills movie for world 3-5. On difficult courses with lots of enemies, some people learned to use simultaneous Ground Pounds to defeat all the enemies at once and clear the level easily.

Even when competing in Coin Battles, strategies change a lot depending on the opponent. In my case, I prioritize collecting coins and don't pay much attention to what my opponent does. Other staff members defeat the other player first, then pick up the coins at their leisure. When you play with four people, the strategies become even more diverse.

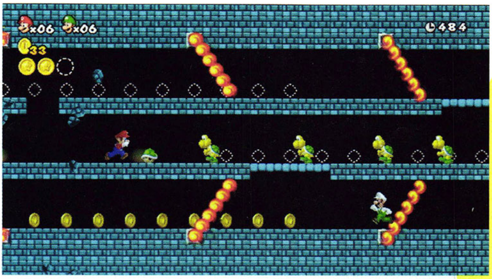
I think it's fun to find strategies and ways of playing that would surprise even the developers.

The Super Skills movies are amazing! How did the idea come about? What did you hope the videos would achieve, and do you think the idea could be applied to other kinds of games?

This idea came about because we wanted to show a more in-depth way of playing the game to all of the people who've been kind enough to play Mario. Speaking from my own past experience, when you watch somebody who is very skilled play, you get really excited, and this indescribable feeling of exultation wells up inside you. Not only that, but it makes you want to give it a shot yourself. Even beginners seem to enjoy watching the Super Skills gameplay. They want to see a lot of the game, and the movies motivate them to collect Star Coins. I think we could use this idea in future games as long as they have similar elements.

How early in the game's development was it decided that Yoshi would return, and why exactly was he brought back for this particular game?

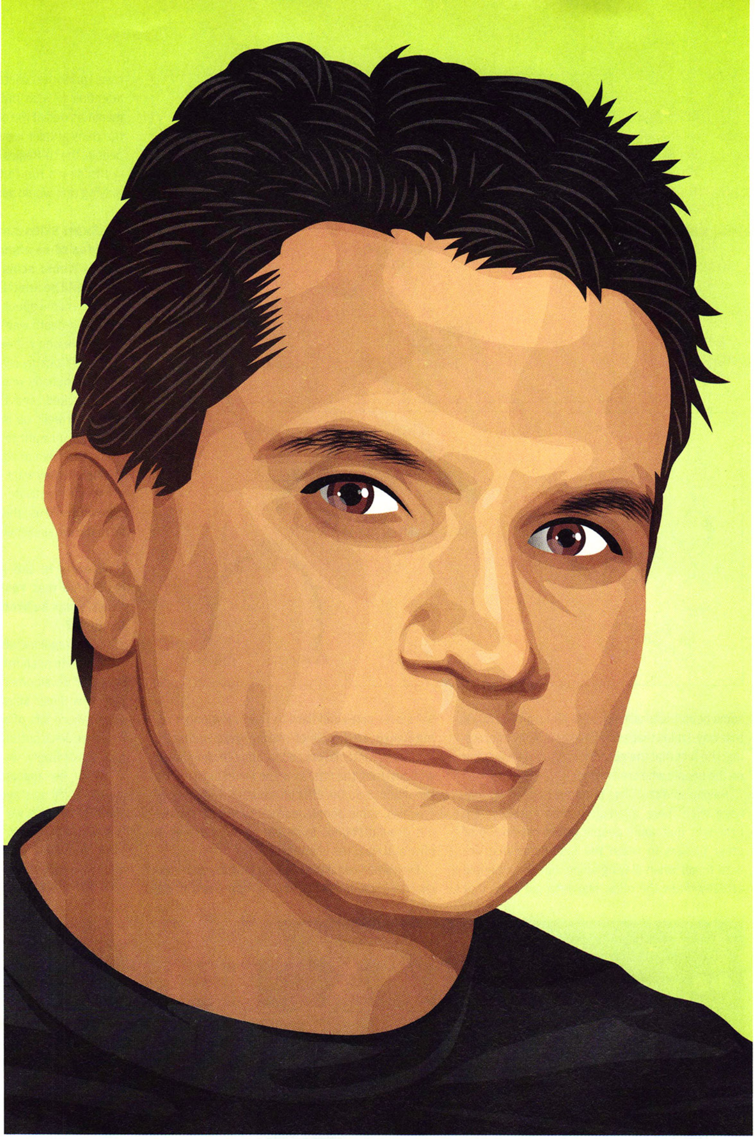
Yoshi is a regular character in the Mario series, so I'd wanted to put him in ever since the very earliest stages of development. Since multiple people can play New Super Mario Bros. Wii, I'd hoped for a game where lots of players fight over one Yoshi. However, since putting Yoshi in changes the gameplay considerably, we decided to limit the courses in which he appears. For example, we didn't include Yoshi on stages that were better suited to Mario alone, and we only put Yoshi into courses that would be made more fun by the addition. I think that made using him livelier than it would otherwise have been.



"I THINK IT'S FUN TO FIND STRATEGIES AND WAYS OF PLAYING THAT WOULD SURPRISE EVEN THE DEVELOPERS."

38

Power Profiles



DATE OF BIRTH
February 18, 1968

BIRTHPLACE
Springfield, Massachusetts

POSITION
Game composer and sound designer, entertainer, TV host and producer, founder and CEO of the Game Audio Network Guild and Video Games Live

BEST KNOWN FOR
Composing the soundtrack for Earthworm Jim and about a zillion other games

FAVORITE FOOD
Anything Italian that doesn't include meat

CURRENT PROJECTS
Flip's Twisted World

Tommy Tallarico

ILLUSTRATION BY CHRISTINA EMPEDOCLES

There are few, if any, creators in the gaming industry as active as composer Tommy Tallarico. Rising to prominence during the 16-bit era with classic hits such as Earthworm Jim, Cool Spot, and Aladdin, Tallarico quickly became one of the most renowned video game musicians in the world—certainly the biggest outside of Japan—and he's gone on to contribute to more than 275 titles. But Tallarico has done a lot more than compose music; he's also helped design games, cohosted successful gaming TV show *The Electric Playground*, and founded a nonprofit group for interactive sound called the Game Audio Network Guild. But his biggest claim to fame may be cocreating the series of Video Games Live concerts, allowing gamers and nongamers all over the world to enjoy live versions of gaming's greatest tunes. Despite his hectic schedule, Tallarico still finds time to delight fans with his unique musical style in titles such as Majesco's upcoming Flip's Twisted World for the Wii console.

NINTENDO POWER
How did you first become involved with the video game business?

TOMMY TALLARICO
My two greatest loves and passions growing up were always video games and music, but I never really thought to ever put the two together until I moved out to California (from Massachusetts) when I was 21 years old. When I got there I picked up a newspaper and saw a job for selling keyboards at Guitar Center. I went down there and they hired me and I started the following day. On my first day at the new job, the first person who walked in the store happened to be a producer at a video game company called Virgin. I was wearing a TurboGrafx16 shirt—a video game T-shirt—[and] he saw my shirt and he asked if I wanted a job testing games. I was like "Heck yeah!" I was in California for three days and I was in the video game industry.... I would bug the vice president of the company literally every day, saying, "Whenever you need music, just let me know. I'll learn how to do it, and do it for free, and if you don't like it, you don't have to use it." So about three or four months later, one of the first games that I was actually a producer and a tester on was Prince of Persia for the Game Boy. I asked him to [let me] do the music and he let me. They liked what they heard and made me the full-time music guy after that.

When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I wanted to be a musician and entertainer from the time I was around three years old. It's all I ever wanted to do and [ever] talked about.

Where did your interest in music come from?

Music had always been around my family—my cousin is Steven Tyler from Aerosmith (his real name is Steven Tallarico), so I always kind of grew up idolizing him and the work that he did. So, I never thought it would be out of my reach to do something similar.... It wasn't until the late '70s, when I started to hear these amazing film scores from things like *Star Wars* and *Rocky* that I felt like I wanted to be a composer. It was the first time I really paid attention to symphonic orchestral music. That's when I started getting into classical music—my favorite being Beethoven—and that's how I learned to write scores for symphonies and orchestras, by listening to the masters such as Beethoven and John Williams.

What are some of your favorite musical artists and musical influences?

Classical music: Beethoven, Mozart; film scores: John Williams, Jerry Goldsmith; rock: Van Halen, Aerosmith, Led Zeppelin, The Police/Sting, Pink Floyd, Boston, Styx, The Eagles, Fleetwood Mac, Journey; electronica/trance: Delerium, Enigma, BT; '50s: Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis; piano: Elton John, Billy Joel; blues: Gary Moore.

One of our favorite games that you've ever worked on is Earthworm Jim. Everything just seemed to click perfectly. What was it like being part of that?

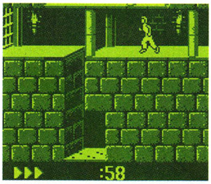
Earthworm Jim is one of my most favorite game franchises that I've worked on because the project was so much fun to be a part of. Our small team of friends had worked together on so many other great products before that (Global Gladiators, Cool Spot, Aladdin), but for EWJ we were just given a timeframe to complete whatever we wanted to. We would come in to work every day and just try to make each other laugh. That was pretty much the game design for the entire project and I think you can really feel that in the final product. As long as it was funny, it was good. That's why musically the game is all over the place—from rock to classical to electronic, polka, ragtime, banjo, Dixie, big band, blues, etc. Whatever I thought was funny or worked I would put in. It didn't necessarily need to fit an overall style. I wish more games took that kind of overall approach these days.

You have the distinction of having worked on one of the NES's most notorious games: Color a Dinosaur. How would you sum up that experience? And if you were going to color a dinosaur, what color would you make it?

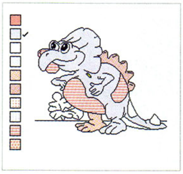
People sometimes ask me what the worst game I ever worked on was, and, of course, I always say, "Color A Dinosaur." I had never done music and sound FX for an NES game before; the vice president of Virgin came into my office one day and asked me to do all the audio for this dinosaur game they had picked up to publish. The problem was that they needed to submit the game to Nintendo the next day!

GAMEOGRAPHY

With so many games to Tommy Tallarico's credit, it goes without saying that we could show only a fraction of them here. He's worked on everything from small, obscure projects to huge franchises such as WWE, Tony Hawk's Pro Skater, and Spider-Man.

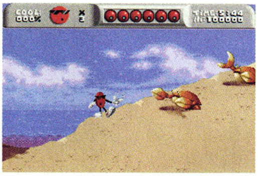


PRINCE OF PERSIA
1992, GAME BOY
MUSIC ARRANGEMENT, SOUND DESIGN, LEAD GAME TESTER



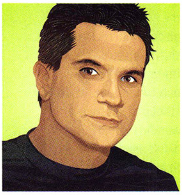
COLOR A DINOSAUR
1993, NES
ORIGINAL MUSIC, SOUND DESIGN

ALADDIN
1993, SEGA GENESIS
MUSIC ARRANGEMENT, ORIGINAL MUSIC, SOUND DESIGN, VOICEOVERS



COOL SPOT
1994, SEGA GENESIS
ORIGINAL MUSIC, SOUND DESIGN

Power Profiles



In regards to what color I would paint a dinosaur, I'll go with plaid. Hey! Don't laugh—you could actually paint the dinosaur plaid in that miserably horrible excuse for a game.

Are there any game soundtracks you've composed that you consider favorites? For that matter, do you have a favorite game soundtrack you didn't compose?
My two favorites are probably Earthworm Jim and Advent Rising. Earthworm Jim for the reasons mentioned above, and Advent Rising (although not a popular or big selling game) was also a great joy for me because I finally got the chance to compose an Italian opera which is something that I always wanted to do.

[My] favorite game soundtrack that I didn't compose would probably be Nobuo Uematsu's Final Fantasy VIII. Songs like "Liberi Fatali" and "Eyes On Me" were really incredible and really spoke to me from a composition standpoint. I couldn't have a favorites list without mentioning the great Koji Kondo and his work on Super Mario Bros. People will be humming that and will recognize those melodies and songs a hundred years from now.

Having worked with so many developers and publishers over the years, what would you say separates a good one from a bad one?
Passion and vision! Being able to follow your heart no matter what.

You've worn a lot of hats other than composer—codesigner on Knockout Kings 2000, for example. How did that come about, and is that something you'd like to do more of someday?
I was a huge boxing fan growing up from watching the *Rocky* movies and always idolizing Muhammad Ali. My good friend who owned Black Ops Entertainment was a guy by the name of John Botti. I created a complete game design for a brand new 3-D boxing game with things that no one had ever done before in a boxing game. He loved it, so we pitched it to Electronic Arts and they decided to give us a shot.

I'd love to design a game again but it takes a lot of time, focus, and dedication that I just don't have available right now.... I have a couple of really interesting and simple game ideas that no one has done yet.

What made you venture into becoming an on-air personality and cohosting a TV show? What do you think you brought to the show as a host?
Victor Lucas, the guy who helped create [*The Electric Playground*], wanted to do an interview with me at E3 back in 1994. He interviewed me and the interview went so well he asked me to be the cohost and coproducer of the show. What worked so well was the chemistry between us. I tried to inject as much humor as possible and would try to play the "bad cop" to Vic's "good cop" style. We were just having fun and not taking ourselves too seriously and I think most people really appreciated that. Some of the hardcores would take what we said a little too seriously sometimes, but for us, it was all in good fun and part of creating entertainment based on our passion for games and the entire industry.

What drove you to create the Video Games Live concerts?
My goal in creating Video Games Live was that I wanted to prove to the world how culturally significant and artistic video games have become. I didn't want to just put on a symphony concert for hardcore gamers; I wanted to do a show. Not necessarily even a concert, but a complete celebration of the video game industry, and so the way we designed the show was with everyone in mind.

Video Games Live includes both classic, simple game tunes and newer, more-complex stuff. Which kind of music do you prefer?
That's a hard question to answer because the answer really is both. In the mid to late '90s when CD ROMs became available as a storage medium we could start using real instruments and real musicians in order to create amazing music. It went from bleeps and bloops to serious scores like Kingdom Hearts, Halo, Metal Gear Solid, Warcraft, God of War, etc., and I love all of those. Of course, some of the greatest video game music ever written came from the bleeps-and-bloops era. Games like Mario, Zelda, Castlevania, Mega Man, Metroid, Sonic, etc., and I love those just as much. So I'm glad that we had that era as well. I really couldn't decide. They're both great for different reasons.

I feel like I haven't seen your name in the credits as much in recent years, but you're contributing to Flip's Twisted World. What attracted you to the project?
Flip's Twisted World was a great project for me because the team really gave me a lot of time to work on the game over the past few years, which gave me the ability to do all of my other stuff as well. One of the things that attracted me the most was that [the developers] were really interested is letting me suggest musical styles. Sometimes it's difficult when you work on

> *"...I wanted to prove to the world how culturally significant and artistic video games have become."*

GAMEOGRAPHY

EARTHWORM JIM
1994, SEGA GENESIS
ORIGINAL MUSIC, SOUND DESIGN, VOICEOVERS

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2000
1999, NINTENDO 64
ORIGINAL MUSIC, SOUND DESIGN, CODESIGNER

BLOOD RAYNE
2003, GAMECUBE
ORIGINAL MUSIC

> *"Creatively, though, for me it's all about emotion. I really want to know the emotions of the character."*

a project and all they want you to do is write music exactly the way or style they want. That wasn't the case with these guys. They were really receptive [to] any ideas I came up with and really wanted me to do what I wanted to. Their ideas and direction were also really great and helpful to the process, as well. They supplied me with a lot of great resources to make my job even easier.

What kind of approach are you taking for the soundtrack to Flip's?
We really wanted to try and keep it light and fun for the most part. We wanted the sounds and melodies to match the mood, emotion, and environments as best we could without stepping all over the gameplay.

Some of the things I used for inspiration were moods and instrumentations from games like Donkey Kong Country, the Chrono series, EarthBound, and others; you'll also hear a touch of big band, swing, and jazz elements in there as well.

How does the music-composition process work for you?
Sitting down with the team and having overall discussions in regards to style and technology is a really important first step. Creatively, though, for me it's all about emotion. I really want to know the emotions of the character. The best-case scenario is when I can actually play the game, but other times, I'll only have a screenshot or art from the level because the game isn't finished yet. Once I have the visuals or the game, I just sit there and wait for stuff to come to my head and then go figure out what's in my head on the piano. I'll then put it in the computer, depending on the style of music (like if it's orchestral) and add the whole orchestra. On certain projects, once I get it in there, I'll record it with a live orchestra or live musicians.

Do you prefer to compose alone or collaborate with others?
I love collaborating with others. I think it always adds great diversity, dynamics, styles, and ideas to the mix. Composing, orchestrating, arranging, mixing, mastering, etc. can be a long and tough [process]. Having other creative input, styles, and another "set of ears" is always a positive thing.

How have things changed in the gaming industry since you started?
Because games have become such a serious business these days, a lot more people are involved in the decision-making process and generally speaking, most people are less willing to take chances. I see this as being a bad thing overall, but luckily newer platforms like the DS...have become a great way for smaller and independent developers to really thrive and succeed. I think all of the most creative, unique, and interesting stuff is coming from these folks.

What aspect of the creative process do you enjoy the most?
When you're in a writing groove and recording and different and new ideas are popping in your head so fast that you can't even get them down quick enough. Listening back to something you just did and being really satisfied and excited about what it sounds like. Letting someone else hear the tune for the first time and seeing them smile and get excited. Those are all the things that I enjoy the most.

If you weren't involved with the gaming industry, what do you think you'd be doing?
Acting, writing, and/or producing movies. Something that eventually I may end up doing farther down the road. I love editing all the videos in Video Games Live and telling a story with the music and visuals.

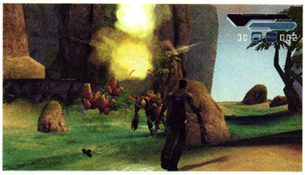
When you're stumped by a particularly difficult problem when composing a soundtrack, what's your process for working through it?
I just simply walk away and do something fun. Take my mind completely off it. I never try to struggle through it. I find that I'm never happy with the end results. I'll just go to Disneyland or something. Go to the beach, [go on] a vacation, a hike...whatever. Just get away for a day or two and then come back to it really fresh.

What other games or game creators do you most admire or respect, and why?
Miyamoto, of course. He is the Steven Spielberg of our industry! Mostly everything he touches turns to gold. That isn't luck—that's skill! I would put other folks such as Will Wright (The Sims) in that category as well. Developers such as Blizzard and Bungie get huge respect points because as teams they always seem to succeed and put out amazing products.

Whose works in other forms of media, such as film or literature, do you most admire or enjoy?
Steven Spielberg as a filmmaker and storytelling visionary I think is amazing. But I've also always admired some of the great entertainers like Houdini, Elvis, and Michael Jackson because of what their presence, creativity, and style brought to millions of people around the world. In literature, I love Dean R. Koontz, and I'm a huge Douglas Adams fan (*The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*).

What is your favorite hobby or pastime?
Aside from video games (of course!), I love baseball (both watching and playing), animals, traveling, vegan cooking, photography, and working on my house.

If you could have one superpower, what would it be?
The ability to fly would be pretty darn cool! Invisibility would be my second choice but I'd probably get myself into a lot of trouble with that one.


ADVENT RISING
2005, XBOX
ORIGINAL MUSIC, SOUND DESIGN, VOICEOVERS

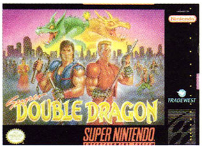
SONIC AND THE BLACK KNIGHT
2009, Wii
CONTRIBUTING COMPOSER

FLIP'S TWISTED WORLD
2010, Wii
COMPOSER

My hair is a restricted weapon in 49 states!

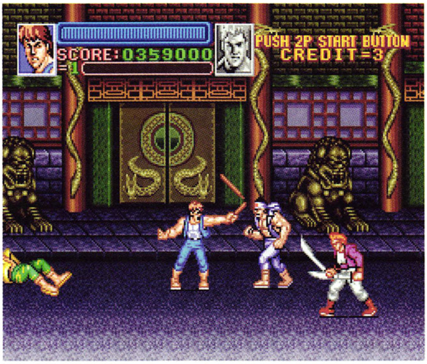
Super Double Dragon

Get your 16-bit kicks with Billy and Jimmy Lee.



PLATFORM: **SUPER NES**
PUBLISHER: **TRADEWEST**
DEVELOPER: **TECHNOS JAPAN**
RELEASE DATE: **OCTOBER 1992**
COVERED IN ISSUES: **38, 41, 51**
NUMBER OF DRAGONS: **2 (DUH)**

There was a time when Double Dragon was the hottest thing going in video games. Starring twin-brother martial artists Billy and Jimmy Lee, Double Dragon was a two-player cooperative game that told the story of how the duo rescued Billy's girlfriend Marian from the evil Shadow Warriors and beat up about a zillion people along the way. The game was a record-setting hit in the arcades, and two sequels followed. Of course, the games were ported to home systems such as the NES (although the ports were never quite as impressive).

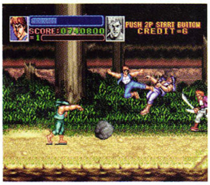


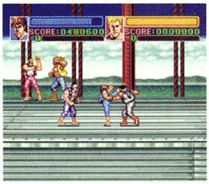
Attention, criminals: if you call your gang something like the Shadow Warriors, some do-gooder's probably gonna nunchuk you in the face.

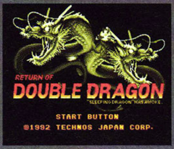
Enter Super Double Dragon. For this fourth installment of the series, the developers at Technos didn't even bother with an arcade version; they went straight to the Super NES with an all-new game that was built from the ground up to take advantage of the hardware's 16-bit capabilities. But instead of mimicking its predecessors' look and feel, Super Double Dragon provided an experience that was distinctly its own. It still featured start-to-finish co-op punk-pummeling action, but the pace was more methodical and the gameplay was deeper. For example, in addition to the standard Double Dragon moves (punches, kicks, jump kicks, shoulder throws, weapon attacks, etc.), you could hold down the L or R Button to build up strength, then unleash a powerful backhand punch or spinning cyclone kick. More important, however, was the inclusion of a new block button. Not only did it let you guard against incoming attacks, but a well-timed block would let you grab your foe's arm, then punish him with a flurry of offense.

Just as the additional moves brought a new dimension to the formula, so did the game's unusual levels. The battle began in a Las Vegas casino, of all places, then transitioned to an airport; another level took place on the back of a speeding semi. But more-typical environments were present, too; the city street stages, complete with remixed classic tunes, screamed of traditional Double Dragon goodness.

Though the Double Dragon saga continued after this installment, the series switched its focus to one-on-one fighting, and before long it faded into obscurity. Nonetheless, fans can look back on Super Double Dragon as one of better beat-'em-ups on the Super NES, and arguably as the pinnacle of the series. —**CHRIS H.**

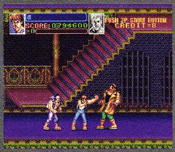


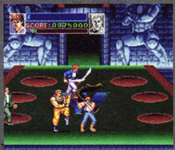




SEEING DOUBLE

The Japanese version of Super Double Dragon, titled Return of Double Dragon, was significantly different from its North American counterpart. Small but notable improvements were made to several aspects of the game. New music was added, and some tracks were reassigned to different levels; the damage inflicted by certain weapons was adjusted; animations were improved for some moves, such as the enemies' slide kick; and an options screen was added that allowed you to adjust the game's difficulty and more. The biggest change, however, was that the final level was doubled in length. Additional areas let you fight your way through the Shadow Warriors' palatial estate, then enter an arena where you faced off against a gauntlet of bosses before challenging their leader, Duke.





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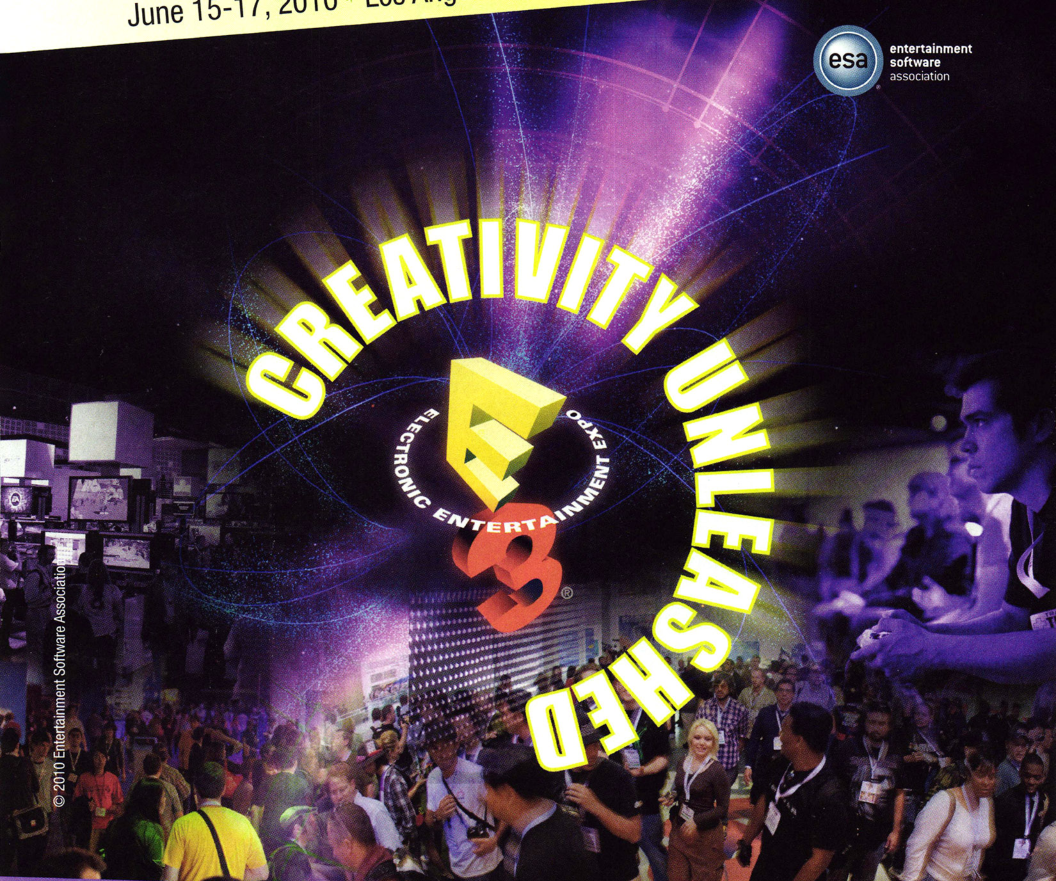

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REVIEWS

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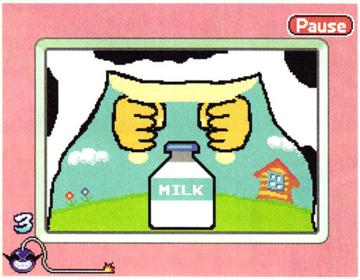
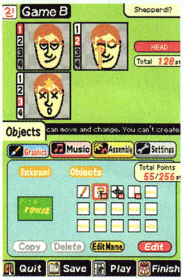
WARIOWARE D.I.Y. pg.82

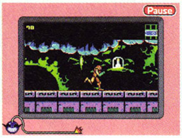
Wario wants YOU

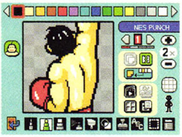
to turn the page and read the WarioWare D.I.Y. review!

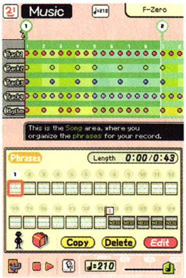




can move and change. You can't create







This is the Song area, where you organize the phrases for your record.

You've Got It Made

WARIOWARE D.I.Y.

RATING: 8.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **INTELLIGENT SYSTEMS**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

WarioWare D.I.Y. is a hard title to review. Normally when you evaluate a game, you can examine things like the graphics, the sound, and the gameplay. That's not the case with WarioWare D.I.Y.—because all of those things are up to you. The potential for a fun time, however, is positively through the roof.

This unique piece of software really delivers on the do-it-yourself premise; it provides a fantastic toolbox that makes it as easy as possible to jump in and start making your own five-second-long instant-gratification microgames. You're not gonna make the next Legend of Zelda or anything, but within the constraints of a microgame, the sky's the limit. Fight an android pirate; cook a grilled-cheese sandwich; catch a lizard in a jar; yank off Santa's beard; pay homage to your favorite NES game—if you can imagine it, you can probably make it.

Everything you need is at your fingertips—a robust graphics editor complete with line tools, numerous brush types, stamps, various colors and textures, and more; a music creator that lets you build tunes from scratch or makes original tunes for you; and a thorough set of AI routines that lets you put it all together. There are limits, of course—the biggest being that you can play your microgames only by tapping the screen, not via the buttons or other input methods—but it's shocking how much you can do within those limits, and it can be very satisfying coming up with clever solutions as you try to determine what those limits are.

In general, though, you're not butting up against limitations; in fact, you'd likely get overwhelmed by all the options at your disposal if it weren't for D.I.Y.'s excellent tutorials. Playing through them might seem a little like going to school, but they do a top-notch job of teaching you the ropes, and they're full of funny bits that will keep you laughing while you're learning.

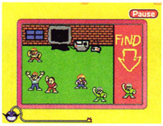
As awesome as it is to make your own games from scratch—and it is pretty awesome—it's not the only thing you can do in WarioWare D.I.Y. The ability to take on "part-time jobs" by adding graphics to otherwise-finished microgames is a great way to get your feet wet, and the comic maker (which lets you create your own four-panel black-and-white comics) and music maker (which allows you you to compose full-length songs)—while more limited in their appeal than the game maker—do a fine job filling their niche.

Strangely, the weakest part of D.I.Y. might be its premade microgames. There's nothing wrong with them—they're quirky, fun, and diverse—but they feel pretty typical by WarioWare's wacky standards. They're more of a resource for your own creations than they are something you'll play over and over again.

But really, D.I.Y. isn't about the premade games; it's about making microgames, sharing them with friends, and downloading their games in return. Thanks to local and Wi-Fi options and the ability to transfer games to WarioWare D.I.Y. Showcase for WiiWare, you'll have plenty of opportunities to do just that. (Note, however, that you can download new microgames only from friends or from Nintendo, not from strangers.)

Despite how many options WarioWare D.I.Y. gives you, you can't help but want more. It'd be awesome if you could import photos and use them as art, or if the hum-your-own-tune feature worked a bit better, or if you had more interface choices for microgames than simply tapping the screen. But what the title *does* provide is an amazing package and an excellent introduction to the world of game making. If you have a creative bone in your body, you'd do well to give WarioWare D.I.Y. a try. **—CHRIS H.**

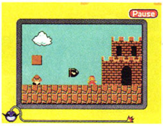
We Microreview Our Own Microgames:



POWER SURGE

A compelling cast of characters makes this one of the most gripping microgames ever created!

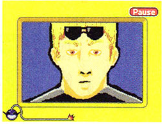
RATING: 5 EXHAUSTED EDITORS



REVENGE

Oh, the drama! You can almost feel the Goomba's angst as he awaits his inevitable demise.

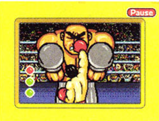
RATING: 1 BLASTED BRO



COOL ALBERT

The only way this Resident Evil homage could be better is if you were pinning the beard on Barry Burton.

RATING: 1 SUAVE VILLAIN



FUNKY BOXING

What visuals! What deep gameplay! This is clearly Punch-Out!! for a new generation.

RATING: 2 BLACK EYES

WRITERS' BLOCK

WHAT SERIES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE GET AN OLD-SCHOOL SEQUEL IN THE VEIN OF MEGA MAN 10 AND SONIC 4?

JUSTIN CHENG

Sure, the franchise hasn't been relevant for a *long* time, but a new *DuckTales* game would rock.

CHRIS HOFFMAN

Final Fight 4! It's been far too long since Mad Gear got a good beating. Keep the 16-bit looks, but add in four-player support. And make Haggar wear slacks!

RANDY NELSON

It's high time we call the Bad Dudes out of retirement. President Barry's been kidnapped—are you a bad enough dude to save him?

CHRIS SLATE

Isn't it obvious? Kid Icarus. Not because the NES and Game Boy titles were amazing triple-A games, but because—with a few key changes—they *could* have been.

DAVID F. SMITH

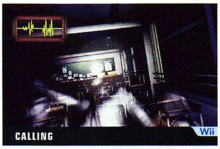
Irem says they'll never make another R-Type shooter, but maybe a new one in the classic style could be the exception, with the variety of weapons from R-Type Final.

STEVE THOMASON

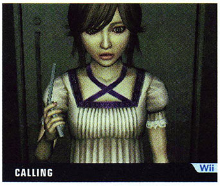
I demanded Sonic the Hedgehog 4 in this very space a few months ago, so hopefully I have some mystical power that make my retro wishes a reality. Next up: give me a new Strider!

PHIL THEOBALD

We need a new Kid Niki: Radical Ninja game! I'd love a sequel that retains the 8-bit look, but I'd take just about anything at this point.



CALLING Wii



CALLING Wii

CALLING

RATING: 5.0

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **HUDSON**
DEVELOPER: **HUDSON**
ESRB: **TEEN**

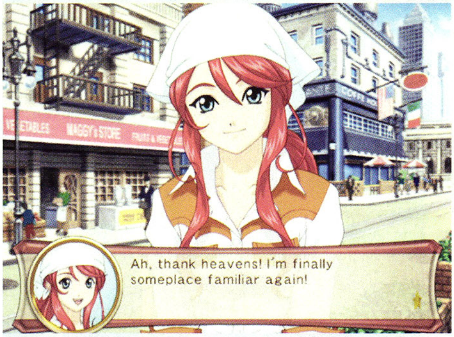
No, Calling isn't a sequel to XSEED's Ju-On: The Grudge—although from looking at (or playing) it, you might not realize that. The setup is the same: you play in first person through a series of vignettes that are essentially jump-scare-filled haunted houses, but, true to its title, Calling introduces a gimmick whereby the Wii Remote controller becomes a "cell phone."

This means you get phone calls from ghosts, who groan and wail over the controller's speaker. It actually can be a little creepy, but more often than not it sounds kind of cheesy—like a bad prank caller. Some levels have you using the cell phone's camera, but basically you're just wandering around as various characters, shaking the Wii Remote wildly when a ghost grabs you.

The pointer-based control is overly sensitive, and we're not sure why you need to enter a separate view mode to open doors and interact with objects—other games let you perform these sorts of gestures without breaking up the game's flow.

If you really liked Ju-On, Calling might be for you; just don't expect its story or overall presentation to grab you the way its ghosts do.

—RANDY N.



Ah, thank heavens! I'm finally someplace familiar again!

The Art of Conversation

SAKURA WARS: SO LONG, MY LOVE

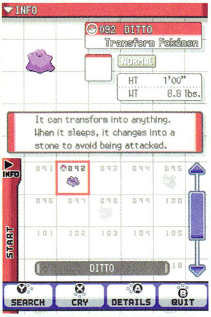
RATING: 7.5

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **NIS AMERICA**
DEVELOPER: **IDEA FACTORY**
ESRB: **TEEN**

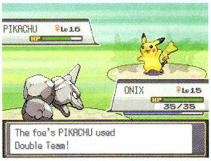
Sakura Wars: So Long, My Love is an odd game. I don't mean just its premise—wherein a troupe of musical-theater-performing girls fights demons by piloting mechs—but the game as a whole. For one thing, the bulk of the gameplay is chatting and developing relationships with people by selecting the appropriate responses (the inappropriate responses are often funnier, of course). This allows for deeper character development as you learn the intriguing backstories of your very stereotypical companions and help them resolve their personal issues. But sometimes I just wanted a change of pace from running around town gabbing with people. Fortunately, there are some minigames interspersed throughout, though those minigames' focus on using the Control Stick and Control Pad make it clear that this game was not originally designed to be used with the Wii Remote-and-Nunchuk combination. (Because performing circular motions with the remote's Control Pad can be difficult, you're much better off using the Classic Controller due to its dual Control Sticks.)

The mech-piloting-and-demon-fighting part of So Long, My Love also helps break things up. While not especially deep, the combat requires a fair amount of strategy. Additionally, it's in battle where you reap the benefits of your relationship-building; the stronger your bonds with your allies, the more powerful your teammates become.

Certainly, Sakura Wars: So Long, My Love has its issues, but it's a game unlike any I've played before, and I applaud NIS America's willingness to finally bring the long-running franchise to North America. I do have to question the publisher's decision to deny Wii owners the option to play the game with the original Japanese voice acting in this distinctly Japanese title, however. **—JUSTIN C.**



It can transform into anything. When it sleeps, it changes into a stone to avoid being attacked.



The foe's PIKACHU used Double Team!

Super Effective

POKÉMON HEARTGOLD AND SOULSILVER VERSIONS

RATING: 9.5

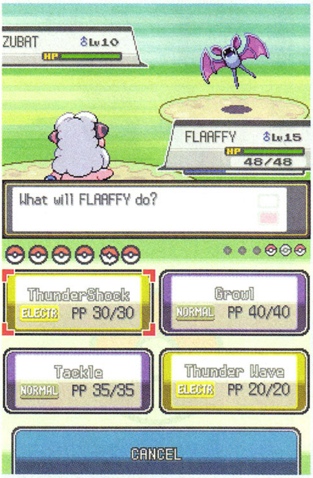
PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **GAME FREAK INC.**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Despite being nearly 10 years old, the Game Boy Color's Pokémon Gold and Silver Versions are still considered by many fans to be among the finest entries in the series. It's certainly not hard to see why. As the first true sequels in the Pokémon franchise, Pokémon Gold and Silver Versions retained the original's addictive "Gotta Catch 'Em All" gameplay, but added a host of innovations that gave players much more to experience. The new features—such as 100 added Pokémon, a real-time clock, and the ability to breed Pokémon— fleshed out the game without weighing things down. Now Pokémon HeartGold and SoulSilver Versions take things a step further; these reimagined updates of Pokémon Gold and Silver Versions aim to retain the quality of the originals while enhancing the overall package (just as 2004's Pokémon FireRed and LeafGreen Versions re-created the very first Pokémon adventures).

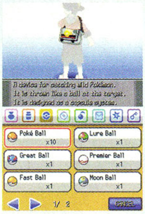
As is the case in most Pokémon games, you play as a plucky youngster (either male or female) who strives to become a Pokémon League Champion. This involves traveling the land, catching and battling Pokémon, combating Gym Leaders, facing off against the nefarious Team Rocket, and eventually becoming strong enough to take on the Elite Four. Overall, the story is extremely simple, which isn't usually a good thing in an RPG. But it's not a detriment here, because in Pokémon games, the plot isn't the focus—it's all about the feeling of immersing yourself in the environment (in this case, the Johto Region) and building a perfect team of Pokémon. And the story can still be entertaining at times (just wait until you discover Team Rocket's outrageous plans for Slowpoke).

Whether you're rescuing Slowpoke or trying to capture an elusive Legendary Pokémon, you'll get attached to the various Pokémon that inhabit Johto. Once again the game's focus is placed on the 100 Pokémon that were introduced in Gold and Silver Versions. These were the first new Pokémon to be brought into the series, and they're a terrific group of characters. They fit in well with the original crew, and now that you can choose a favorite Pokémon to follow your character around, it's even easier to bond with them. It's also rewarding to lead your Pokémon through the levelling process. The anticipation of leveling up the Pokémon and teaching them new moves make them feel like an invaluable part of your team. After you become a Champion, you'll find recently discovered Pokémon in the game as well—all told, you'll have the ability to catch more Pokémon than ever.

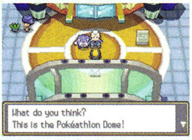
With so many different Pokémon to collect, there are plenty of options for building an unbeatable team. The game's battle system is a lot deeper than it appears. Sure, the system is built around basic rock-paper-scissor rules (where a Water-type attack has an advantage over a Fire-type Pokémon, etc.), but with the wide variety of Abilities and moves to teach your party, there are endless combinations from which to choose when assembling a strong team.



What will FLAAFFY do?

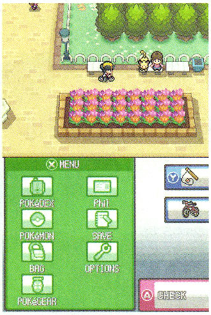


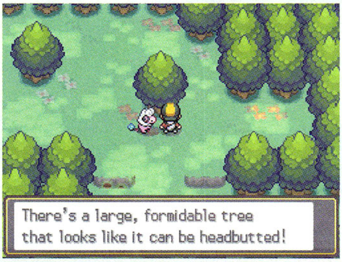
A device for catching wild Pokémon. It is thrown like a ball at the target. It is designed as a capsule system.



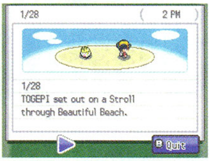
What do you think?
This is the Pokéathlon Dome!

[Right] The game is filled with nice new touches, like the ability to equip two items.





There's a large, formidable tree that looks like it can be headbutted!



1/28
TOGEPI set out on a Stroll through Beautiful Beach.

In addition to the aforementioned bond you'll form with your Pokémon, the real-time aspect of the game really draws you in. Knowing that certain Pokémon can be caught at only a certain time of day keeps you on your toes, and daily and weekly events like the lottery and a bug-catching contest encourage you to return continually. One of the most interesting daily events is the Pokéathlon, a series of enjoyable minigames that earn you points to spend on all sorts of items. The available items change daily, so repeat competition is a must.

Considering that handheld gaming technology has advanced quite a bit in the decade since Pokémon Gold and Silver Versions were released, it should come as no surprise that Pokémon HeartGold and SoulSilver Versions look and sound significantly better than their inspirations. Now the games look more akin to recent titles like Pokémon Platinum Version, with a few subtle improvements such as visible gusts of wind and the soft sound of your feet moving through tall grass. Touch-screen support has been modified as well, making it even easier to organize your collected Pokémon. Once you have a couple hundred of the little guys in storage, you'll really appreciate how convenient the touch screen is. Other little details—like the ability to set two key items or toggle your running shoes on and off —are not huge innovations, but will make you wonder how you lived without them.

Of course, you can't have a great Pokémon game without a strong multiplayer aspect, and all of the series' latest wireless and Wi-Fi functionality is present here. Trading and battling Pokémon with your friends is just as simple as it has always been, and the ability to trade with players from around the globe is always exciting. There's a reason people still get together for real-life Pokémon tournaments—there's a ton of strategy to these competitions, and determining the best Trainer makes for some rewarding matches.

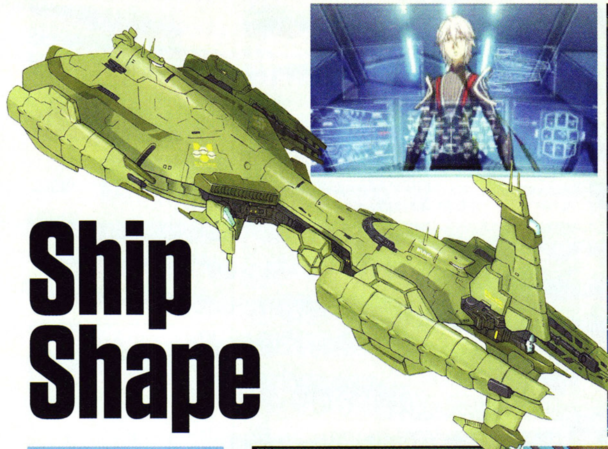
Unfortunately, despite all of the new additions in these rebuilt games, a couple of details still seem out of date. By this point, I would fully expect my Pikachu to be scampering around behind me saying "Pika Pi!" rather than unleashing the same old (far less endearing) electronic screeches. Also, the animation during battles seems rather stark nowadays. Granted, it's significantly more impressive than it was 10 years ago, but that's not quite enough.

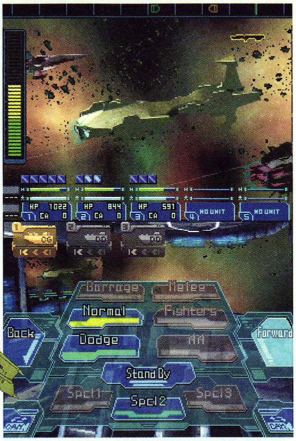
Those two minor complaints aside, Pokémon HeartGold and SoulSilver Versions are fantastic adventures that sport possibly the best bonus feature ever in an RPG (as with Pokémon Gold and Silver versions, your adventure is just beginning when you reach the end of the game). With its bevy of new features and improvements, old-school Pokémon fans will love this return to Johto, and if you've been dismissing the series as "kid's stuff" all this time, this is an ideal opportunity to redeem yourself and see what all the fuss is about. **—PHIL T.**

Pokémon to Go

You can't discuss Pokémon HeartGold and SoulSilver Versions without mentioning the new Pokéwalker accessory, which is included with each copy of the game. As revealed last issue, this pocket-sized pedometer-like device allows you to carry one of your Pokémon around with you in the real world. This gains your Pokémon experience as you walk, and generates Watts that can be spent to find items and Pokémon.

As fun as it is to take your Pokémon for a walk or link your Pokéwalker wirelessly with a friend to receive special gifts, the best part of the device is its ability to capture wild Pokémon that can then be transferred into your DS game. There are even Pokémon that can be caught only with the Pokéwalker, so there's extra encouragement to get active. It may seem like a gimmick at first, but it's actually quite fun to play around with. We hope future Pokémon titles will continue to support it.




HP 1022 CA 0
HP 844 CA 0
HP 591 CA 0
NO UNIT
NO UNIT
Barrage
Melee
Normal
Fighters
Back
Dodge
Forward
Stand By
Spcl1
Spcl2
Spcl3

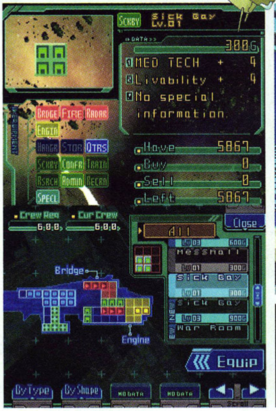
Ship Shape

INFINITE SPACE

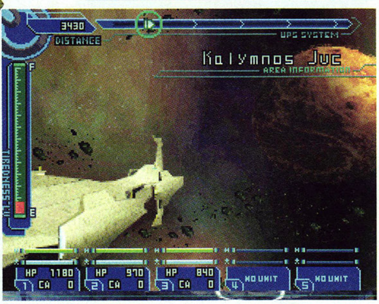
RATING: 8.0

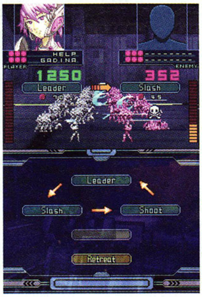
PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
DEVELOPER: **NUDE MAKER/PLATINUMGAMES**
ESRB: **TEEN**

For hardcore stat junkies and sci-fi nerds (among whom I count myself), Infinite Space is like a little slice of nirvana jammed into a DS game card. This space-faring strategy-RPG allows you to assemble your own fleet of up to five ships and customize them as you see fit, from recruiting crewmembers to deciding whether your flagship would benefit more from that new deflector shield or a mess hall.


SCKBY
Sick Bay
Lv.01
300G
MED TECH + 4
Livability + 4
No special information.
Have 5867
Buy 0
Sell 0
Left 5867
BRDGE
FIRE
RADAR
ENGIN
HANGR
STOR
QTRS
SCKBY
CONFR
TRAIN
RSRCH
ADMIN
RECRN
SPECL
Crew Req 6,0,0
Cur Crew 6,0,0
Close
All
Messhall
Sick Bay
Sick Bay
War Room
Bridge
Engine
Equip
By Type
By Shape
NO DATA
NO DATA

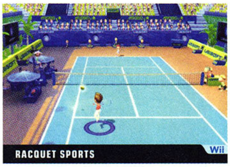
[Left] The various facilities are represented by Tetris-like shapes, which you place on your ship's grid. Space is limited, so choose wisely!

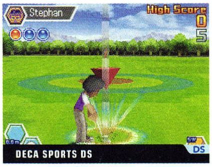

3430
DISTANCE
UPS SYSTEM
Kalymnos Juc
AREA INFORMATION
TIREDNESS
HP 1180 CA 0
HP 970 CA 0
HP 840 CA 0
NO UNIT
NO UNIT


HELP
GADINA
PLAYER
ENEMY
1250
352
Leader
Slash
Leader
Slash
Shoot
Retreat

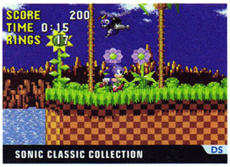
Things start off a bit slowly, as you're given only a single vessel with limited options, but as you explore the universe, meet new friends, and start earning cash, the game gradually peels back additional layers of depth, easing you nicely into what could have been a pretty overwhelming endeavor. The interface for customizing your ship is fun and intuitive, and there's always a certain sense of satisfaction that comes with upgrading your fleet. Battles take place in real time and seem a bit simplistic at first, but you'll quickly discover that some genuine strategy is required to prevent your carefully tailored crafts from becoming scrap metal. I do wish the presentation during combat were a bit more dynamic, though; what's here sort of looks like the space version of the Civil War.

Infinite Space's production values are otherwise pretty impressive. The ship designs are varied and appealing, the HUD looks incredibly slick, and the soundtrack, though fairly limited, features some nice compositions. The story and writing aren't going to win any awards, but they're not the reason to embark on this particular journey. This is a game for those of us who always wanted to be Captain Kirk or, better yet, to design the *Enterprise*. —**STEVE T.**

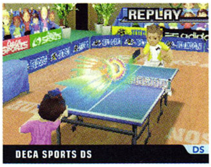

RACQUET SPORTS Wii



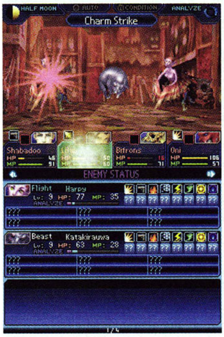
DECA SPORTS DS DS

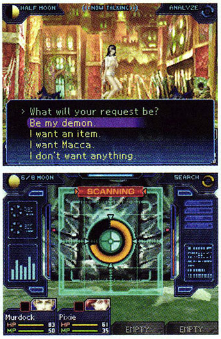


SONIC CLASSIC COLLECTION DS



DECA SPORTS DS DS





What will your request be?
Be my demon.
I want an item.
I want Macca.
I don't want anything.

RACQUET SPORTS

RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **UBISOFT**
DEVELOPER: **UBISOFT**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

As you can probably guess, Racquet Sports offers a variety of sports to play, all of which use some sort of racquet. There's tennis, badminton, squash, ping-pong, and beach tennis (which is like regular tennis, except you can't let the ball hit the sand)—basic fare with basic Wii Sports Tennis-style gameplay. Still, Racquet Sports is fun, especially when playing with up to three friends. Interestingly, the game supports Ubisoft's Motion Tracking Camera, which allows you play without any sort of controller (just wave your hand to swing). It's a neat single-player-only gimmick, though it's not the most precise control scheme (of course, the game occasionally has some issues differentiating backhand and forehand using the Wii MotionPlus peripheral, too). **—JUSTIN C.**

SONIC CLASSIC COLLECTION

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
DEVELOPER: **SONIC TEAM/THE CREATIVE ASSEMBLY**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

This isn't the first time Sega's re-released these games, and it surely will not be the last. Still, if you want some old-fashioned Sonic speed on the DS, this collection will do you: it comprises Sonics 1, 2, and 3, Sonic & Knuckles, plus the Knuckles-ized versions of Sonic 2 and 3 (without the need to futz around with any Lock-On Technology).

The DS versions seem like they might have some faint graphical glitches—semitransparent backgrounds, especially in Sonic 2, come out looking a little flickery. That's all there is to complain about, though, and it isn't much. The DS screen's refresh rate is more than enough to keep up with the action, so you'll just need to make sure your eyes can keep up as well. **—DAVID S.**

DECA SPORTS DS

RATING: 5.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **HUDSON**
DEVELOPER: **HUDSON**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Hudson's minigame series makes the leap from Wii to Nintendo DS, but in an effort to feature only brand-new events, Deca Sports DS pulls together all sorts of curiously unrelated sports. Where else are you going to find skydiving, cheerleading, bobsledding, and arm wrestling in one package? While events such as wall climbing, ping-pong, and golf are satisfyingly simple and enjoyable, others seem meager or mediocre, with a couple (like clay-shooting and rugby) hampered by poor controls or overcomplicated rules. Deca Sports DS gives you a few different ways to experience its 10 sports, including tournaments and quick challenges, but aside from a couple of winning events, it's doubtful you'll keep coming back for more. **—ANDREW H.**

A Long, Strange Trip

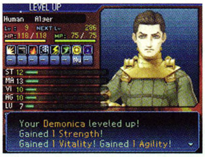
SHIN MEGAMI TENSEI: STRANGE JOURNEY

RATING: 8.0

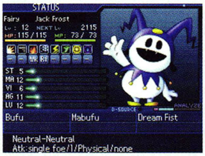
PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **ATLUS**
DEVELOPER: **ATLUS**
ESRB: **MATURE**

Many modern RPGs seem to be built on the same basic principles as a carnival ride. You take off along the rails, you see a few exciting sights, the car comes to a stop and you go on with your day. It's a good time, but you're fully aware that you weren't in control of the experience most of the way.

Shin Megami Tensei: Strange Journey doesn't work like that. For better or for worse, it makes the player the master of his own destiny. As it turns out, that's a heck of a challenge, but the challenge is worth it.



Your Demonica leveled up!
Gained 1 Strength!
Gained 1 Vitality! Gained 1 Agility!

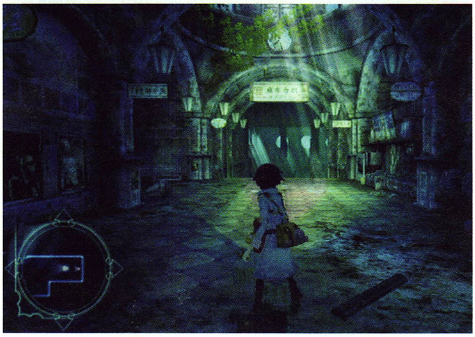


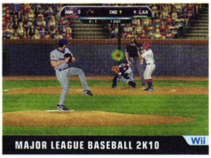
Neutral-Neutral
Atk: single foe/1/Physical/none

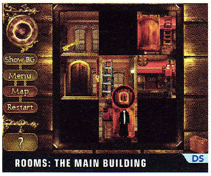
If you've played the Etrian Odyssey dungeon-crawls from Atlus, you'll have some idea of what's in store here. Strange Journey is built on the same basic structure—the same visual presentation, a similar combat system—and it's almost as murderously difficult. There's a lot of new gameplay built atop that core foundation, though, starting with the famous Megami Tensei demon-summoning system. The main character is a commando in an armored suit, sent to dig up the mysteries of an expanding dimensional void, but the party he leads is a motley crew of beasts and spirits he enlists along the way. They're the ones who do the lion's share of the fighting.

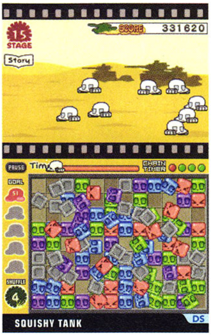
Collecting demons, building up their powers, and fusing them together to create new allies is a game in itself, but it's just a small part of the larger experience. On a micro level, the dungeons are riddled with extra quests and side-story scenes to discover, and on a macro level, every move you make leads to subtle changes in the hero's alignment. What awaits at the end of the story depends on the steps you took getting there, which is one of the many unusual rewards Strange Journey offers.

—DAVID S.




MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL 2K10


ROOMS: THE MAIN BUILDING


SQUISHY TANK

Restless Dreams

FRAGILE DREAMS: FAREWELL RUINS OF THE MOON

RATING: 5.5

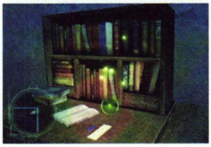
PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **XSEED**
DEVELOPER: **NAMCO BANDAI**
ESRB: **TEEN**

Of all the mysteries in Fragile Dreams: Ruins of the Moon, the most puzzling one is this: how did a game with such high production values end up with such bargain-bin gameplay? The artists and writers of Fragile Dreams clearly poured their hearts into the project, but their work is undermined at every turn by sloppy combat and poor design decisions.

Fragile Dreams is set in the crumbling ruins of Tokyo, several years after a mysterious incident wiped virtually all of humanity off of the planet. Now weeds and rust are the only visitors to an abandoned amusement park, while rot and vermin eat away at a neighboring hotel. The game's environments are both creepy and beautiful, and are a perfect match for the story of a lonely survivor searching for companions.

In an adventure driven by story and mood, all the gameplay needed to do was stay out of the way. But the clumsy, button-mashy combat, randomly breaking weapons, and strictly limited inventory space contribute nothing but a steady stream of petty annoyances. The weak gameplay is tolerable during the first part of the game, when the story and environments are thoroughly compelling. But in the final third of Fragile Dreams' roughly 12-hour quest, the colorful and imaginative areas give way to generic concrete corridors and sewer tunnels, and an increased emphasis on combat makes completing the game a chore.

Fragile Dreams has serious flaws, but it shouldn't be dismissed entirely. The developers have accomplished a rare feat in producing a game that is legitimately thought-provoking, original, and visually distinctive. Too bad they couldn't find a way to make it fun. **—CASEY L.**



MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL 2K10

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **2K SPORTS**
DEVELOPER: **2K CHINA**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Though it's not quite all-star material, MLB 2K10 is a significant improvement over its predecessor. The pitching mechanics remain superb, and lots of little tweaks to batting, fielding, and baserunning bring those aspects much closer to the same level of quality. What's more, there are tons of new difficulty sliders and gameplay options that allow you to better tailor the experience to your skill level. In the minus column, the game still isn't much to look at, and many of last year's niggling AI problems remain, including some truly bizarre managerial tendencies and the absurd frequency of pick-off throws regardless of who's on base. What's really inexcusable, though, is the continued lack of online play, especially following the robust offerings in this season's NHL and NBA titles from 2K. **—STEVE T.**

ROOMS: THE MAIN BUILDING

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **HUDSON**
DEVELOPER: **NATSUME/HANDMADE GAME**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Rooms: The Main Building turns sliding-image puzzles—where you shift single squares to properly arrange a larger picture—into a perplexing adventure in which moving tiles creates a path for your character to reach the exit. The brain-taxing puzzles only get tougher as you go, with new tools (including teleporters and subway platforms) increasing the complexity of rooms as you progress. Not only is the DS touch screen perfect for sliding around tiles, but also for easily assembling your own stages, which can be shared wirelessly with pals. A bit more story or presentational flair would've been appreciated, but even as it is, Rooms offers a pretty unique and worthwhile challenge for portable-puzzle junkies. **—ANDREW H.**

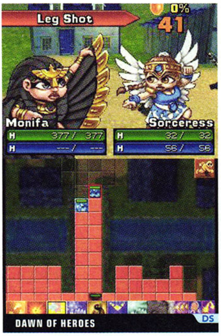
SQUISHY TANK

RATING: 8.0

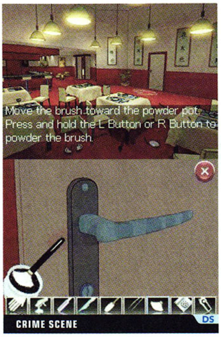
PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **NATSUME**
DEVELOPER: **NATSUME**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Does the gaming world really need another match-three, Collapse!-style puzzler? After playing Squishy Tank, I'd say absolutely. The shining light of this adorable game is its supersilly 80-level story mode about a bunch of lovably squishy talking tank recruits. It's loaded with funny dialogue that even pokes fun at Metal Gear Solid and Fallout 3.

The gameplay will be nothing new to puzzle fans—you tap chains of three or more like-colored blocks to clear them and add time to the countdown meter—but this simple and colorful game is very well put together. Additionally, random special blocks affect the playing field in crazy ways. A charming personality and numerous play modes make Squishy Tank a real treat. **—NATHAN M.**



DAWN OF HEROES



Move the brush toward the powder pot. Press and hold the L Button or R Button to powder the brush.

CRIME SCENE

DAWN OF HEROES

RATING: 7.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **MAJESCO**
DEVELOPER: **WICKED STUDIOS**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

There isn't always room for humor when you're wielding deadly blades and volatile magic to save a kingdom from annihilation. However, Dawn of Heroes proves a good turn-based strategy-RPG doesn't always have to stick to the same dusty playbook.

This cartoonish adventure stars a slapstick band of mercenaries who've been duped by a prophetic magic belt into embarking on an epic quest to defeat five cursed barons who are making trouble for the kingdom. The whining and bickering that ensues is certainly comical, but it's the game's unusual style and interesting turn-based battles that really seal the deal.

Most of your strategizing happens on the small top-down map grid located on the touch screen. Here you maneuver your band of burly warriors and furry spellcasters into position to dish out some wild attacks on your foes. The map interface is rather dull, though seeing the results of your actions play out in nicely animated 3-D combat sequences on the top screen is impressive and satisfying.

Different enemies have a resistance to certain attacks, and that plays out in more complex and intriguing ways as your party levels up and runs into tougher and weirder opponents—and they do get stranger as you go. There may not be many new ideas in Dawn of Heroes, but the hilarious dialogue and wacky adversaries still make for a memorable experience. **—NATHAN M.**

CRIME SCENE

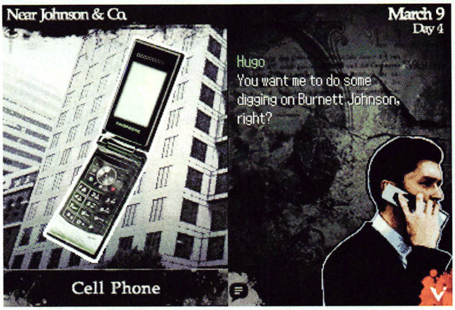
RATING: 5.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **SOUTHPEAK**
DEVELOPER: **WHITE BIRDS PRODUCTIONS**
ESRB: **MATURE**

The idea of a crime-scene-investigation game for DS seems like a great one, given the various tools real CSIs employ and the ability to simulate their use via a touch screen. Although the not-very-cleverly titled Crime Scene gets that mostly right, we find it guilty of not doing anything else particularly well.

The cases themselves aren't imaginative, the writing often seems poorly translated, and the game is sometimes too unforgiving about whether you've used your tools properly. It all boils down to repeating the same steps and presenting your case to the brass—basically showing them the evidence in the correct order.

Yes, it sounds like Phoenix Wright in that respect, but Crime Scene has none of the charm, character, or creativity of Capcom's courtroom series. **—RANDY N.**



Hugo
You want me to do some digging on Burnett Johnson, right?

Time Cop

AGAIN

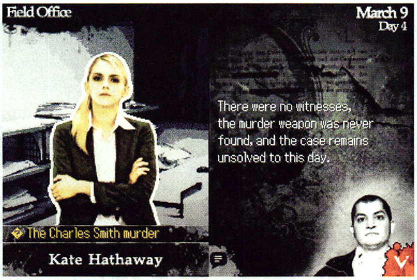
RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **TECMO KOEI**
DEVELOPER: **CING**
ESRB: **TEEN**

The DS has had no shortage of mystery games—including Hotel Dusk, which was developed by CING, the same team behind Again. Like that game, this one has a unique visual style (sketched-over photos of real people). But Again also features a fresh gameplay mechanic that we wish got more use.

As FBI agent Jonathan "J" Weaver, players are out to solve a string of murders that appear to be the work of the Providence Killer, who seems to have returned after 19 years and is committing gruesome acts in the same locations as he did nearly two decades earlier. In between some pretty basic mystery-game dialog and clue gathering, J visits these crime scenes and is able to see them simultaneously as they are in the present and as they were 19 years prior—you hold the DS like a book; the left screen displays the past, and the right screen shows the present.

The idea of these puzzles is to carefully examine the crime scenes and manipulate them so that they look exactly as they did in the past. Doing so reveals more clues. But we wish there were more of these scenes. Still, they're a fresh new twist that really make use of the DS hardware and, along with a good story/dialog, make picking up Again an open-and-shut case for budding crime-solvers with a taste for the unusual. **—RANDY N.**



There were no witnesses, the murder weapon was never found, and the case remains unsolved to this day.

REVIEWS ARCHIVE

THE COMPLETE LIST OF NINTENDO POWER REVIEWS FROM THE PAST YEAR

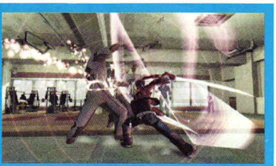
SCORES REFLECT INDIVIDUAL REVIEWERS' OPINIONS

Wii

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
Academy of Champions: Soccer	6.5	Ubisoft	248	E
Astro Boy: The Video Game	7.5	D3Publisher	248	E10+
Avatar: The Game	5.0	Ubisoft	250	T
The Beatles: Rock Band	9.0	MTV Games	247	T
The Bigs 2	6.0	2K Sports	244	E10+
Boom Blox Bash Party	8.0	Electronic Arts	243	E
A Boy and His Blob	8.5	Majesco	247	E
Broken Sword: Shadow of the Templars—The Director's Cut	7.0	Ubisoft	241	T
Call of Duty: Modern Warfare: Reflex	9.0	Activision	249	M
The Conduit	8.0	Sega	243	T
Cursed Mountain	7.0	Deep Silver	246	M
Dance Dance Revolution: Hottest Party 3	6.5	Konami	248	E10+
Data East Arcade Classics	6.5	Majesco	252	T
Dead Space Extraction	8.0	Electronic Arts	247	M
Destiny of Zorro	2.5	505	243	E10+
DiRT 2	4.5	Codemasters	247	E10+
DJ Hero	8.5	Activision	249	T
Don King Boxing	5.5	2K Sports	241	T
Dragon Ball: Revenge of King Piccolo	6.5	Namco Bandai	248	E10+
Drawn to Life: The Next Chapter	7.0	THQ	248	E
Endless Ocean: Blue World	7.5	Nintendo	252	E10+
Excitebots: Trick Racing	8.0	Nintendo	241	E
Family Fun Football	4.5	Tecmo	247	E
FIFA Soccer 10	6.0	Electronic Arts	248	E
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: The Crystal Bearers	8.0	Square Enix	250	T
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Echoes of Time	6.0	Square Enix	240	E10+
Ghostbusters: The Video Game	7.5	Atari	243	E10+
G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra	5.0	Electronic Arts	246	T
Grand Slam Tennis	7.5	Electronic Arts	243	E
Guilty Gear XX Accent Core Plus	7.5	Aksys	241	T
Guitar Hero 5	8.0	Activision	247	T
Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince	5.5	Electronic Arts	244	E10+
Harvest Moon: Animal Parade	7.5	Natsume	248	E
Help Wanted	4.5	Hudson	242	E10+
Indiana Jones and the Staff of Kings	7.5	LucasArts	243	T
Jambo! Safari	3.5	Sega	250	E
Ju-On: The Grudge	6.0	XSEED	247	M
Karaoke Revolution	6.0	Konami	248	T
Klonoa	9.0	Namco Bandai	241	E10+
LEGO Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	6.5	LucasArts	249	E10+
LEGO Rock Band	8.0	Warner Bros.	249	E10+
Let's Tap	7.0	Sega	243	E
Little King's Story	9.0	XSEED	244	T
Madden NFL 10	8.0	Electronic Arts	245	E
MadWorld	9.0	Sega	240	M
Major League Baseball 2K9	6.0	2K Sports	240	E
Major Minor's Majestic March	6.0	Majesco	241	E
Marble Saga: Kororinpa	7.5	Hudson	240	E
Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games	7.0	Sega	247	E
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	5.5	Activision	248	T
Mini Ninjas	7.5	Eidos	247	E10+
MotoGP	4.0	Capcom	240	E
The Munchables	7.0	Namco Bandai	243	E
Muramasa: The Demon Blade	8.0	Ignition	246	T
MySims Agents	7.0	Electronic Arts	247	E
MySims Party	5.0	Electronic Arts	240	E
Naruto Shippuden: Clash of Ninja Revolution 3	7.5	Tomy	249	T
NBA 2K10	6.0	2K Sports	247	E
Need for Speed Nitro	7.0	Electronic Arts	249	E10+
New Super Mario Bros. Wii	9.0	Nintendo	249	E
NHL 2K10	8.0	2K Sports	246	E10+
No More Heroes 2: Desperate Struggle	9.0	Ubisoft	252	M
Onechanbara: Bikini Zombie Slayers	6.5	D3Publisher	240	M
Overlord: Dark Legend	7.0	Codemasters	244	T
Phantom Brave: We Meet Again	8.0	NIS America	243	T
Pinball Hall of Fame: The Gottlieb Collection	6.5	Crave	251	E
Pro Evolution Soccer 2010	8.0	Konami	250	E
Punch-Out!!	8.5	Nintendo	242	E10+
Rabbids Go Home	7.0	Ubisoft	249	E10+
Ready 2 Rumble Revolution	5.0	Atari	240	T
Resident Evil: The Darkside Chronicles	8.0	Capcom	249	M
Rune Factory Frontier	7.5	Marvelous Entertainment USA/XSEED	240	E10+
Shaun White Snowboarding: World Stage	7.0	Ubisoft	249	E
Shiren the Wanderer	6.5	Atlus	252	T
Silent Hill: Shattered Memories	8.0	Konami	249	M
SimAnimals Africa	5.0	Electronic Arts	248	E
The Sky Crawlers: Innocent Aces	7.0	XSEED	250	T
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	8.0	Sega	252	E
Spectrobes: Origins	5.5	Disney	246	E10+
Spore Hero	7.0	Electronic Arts	247	E10+
Spyborgs	7.5	Capcom	247	T
Star Wars The Clone Wars: Republic Heroes	5.0	LucasArts	249	T
Super Monkey Ball Step & Roll	5.5	Sega	252	E
Tatsunoko vs. Capcom: Ultimate All-Stars	9.0	Capcom	251	T
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Smash-Up	7.5	Ubisoft	247	E10+
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10	9.0	Electronic Arts	243	E
Tornado Outbreak	6.5	Konami	247	E10+
Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen	5.5	Activision	245	T
Up	6.5	THQ	242	E
Valhalla Knights: Eldar Saga	4.0	XSEED	246	T
Virtua Tennis 2009	7.0	Sega	244	E

MORE ON:

NO MORE HEROES 2: DESPERATE STRUGGLE



NMH2 bogs down a bit during the full-stage slash-'em-ups preceding each boss, but the frantic mix of 8-bit minigames, odd jobs, and outrageous cut-scenes keep things lively (for Mature players only). —CHRIS S.

MORE ON:

TATSUNOKO VS. CAPCOM: ULTIMATE ALL-STARS

I admit it: I didn't think this title would get a domestic release because it seemed far too Japanese. (I mean, how many people have even *heard* of Tatsunoko in North America?) But I'm very glad that I was wrong, as this is my favorite fighting game on Wii. —JUSTIN C.

4 HIT
7,084 BILLION DAMAGE!
83

Wii Sports Resort	8.5	Nintendo	245	E
WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2010	7.5	THQ	248	T
X-Men Origins: Wolverine	5.0	Activision	243	T

MORE ON:

NO MORE HEROES

While Chris S. slices and dices his way through the sequel, I'm finally catching up with Mr. Touchdown's first M-rated adventure and loving every minute of it. Sure, the game could use a bit more polish, but its pure, unabashed weirdness is positively infectious. If gaming had a few more directors like Suda 51, the medium would be better for it. —**STEVE T.**

Nintendo DS

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
Ace Attorney Investigations: Miles Edgeworth	8.0	Capcom	252	T
Ant Nation	2.0	Konami	245	E
Assassin's Creed II: Discovery	7.0	Ubisoft	250	T
Atelier Annie: Alchemists of Sera Island	8.0	NIS America	248	E10+
Avalon Code	8.5	Marvelous Entertainment USA/XSEED	240	E10+
Avatar: The Game	5.0	Ubisoft	250	E10+
Bejeweled Twist	8.5	PopCap	251	E
Black Sigil: Blade of the Exiled	5.0	Graffiti	242	E
Bleach: The 3rd Phantom	4.0	Sega	246	T
Bookworm DS	8.5	PopCap	249	E
Cooking Mama 3: Shop & Chop	6.0	Majesco	248	E
C.O.P. The Recruit	4.0	Ubisoft	249	T
C.O.R.E.	5.5	Graffiti	242	M
The Dark Spire	5.0	Atlus	241	E10+
Dawn of Discovery	8.5	Ubisoft	244	E
Dokapon Journey	4.0	Atlus	241	E10+
Dragon Ball Z: Attack of the Saiyans	8.0	Namco Bandai	248	E10+
Drawn to Life: The Next Chapter	8.0	THQ	248	E
Fighting Fantasy: The Warlock of Firetop Mountain	4.0	Aspyr	248	T
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Echoes of Time	6.5	Square Enix	240	E10+
Flower, Sun, and Rain	6.0	Marvelous Entertainment USA/XSEED	240	T
Fossil Fighters	8.0	Nintendo	246	E
Gardening Mama	8.0	Majesco	240	E
G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra	5.0	Electronic Arts	245	E10+
Glory of Heracles	7.0	Nintendo	251	E10+
Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars	9.0	Rockstar	241	M
Guitar Hero On Tour: Modern Hits	7.0	Activision	244	E10+
Harvest Moon: Frantic Farming	8.0	Natsume	243	E
Harvest Moon: Sunshine Islands	7.0	Natsume	248	E
Henry Hatsworth in the Puzzling Adventure	8.0	Electronic Arts	240	E
Hero's Saga: Laevatein Tactics	7.0	Aksys	247	T
IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds of Prey	4.0	505	246	E10+
Jake Hunter Detective Story: Memories of the Past	6.0	Aksys	242	T
Kingdom Hearts 358/2 Days	9.0	Square Enix	247	E10+
Knights in the Nightmare	8.0	Atlus	243	T
The Legend of Zelda: Spirit Tracks	9.5	Nintendo	250	E10+
The Legendary Starfy	7.0	Nintendo	243	E
LEGO Battles	5.0	Warner Bros.	243	E
LEGO Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	5.0	LucasArts	249	E10+
Lux-Pain	4.0	Ignition	240	T
Magician's Quest: Mysterious Times	7.5	Konami	242	E10+
Mario & Luigi: Bowser's Inside Story	9.5	Nintendo	246	E
Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games	8.0	Sega	247	E
Mega Man Star Force 3: Red Joker/Black Ace	6.0	Capcom	244	E
Miami Law	3.0	Hudson	243	T
Might & Magic: Clash of Heroes	8.5	Ubisoft	247	E10+
Mini Ninjas	6.0	Eidos	247	E10+
Naruto Shippuden: Ninja Council 4	5.0	Tomy	243	E10+
Naruto Shippuden: Ninja Destiny 2	7.0	Tomy	247	T
Nostalgia	7.0	Ignition	248	E10+
Overlord Minions	7.0	Codemasters	244	E10+
Peggle Dual Shot	8.5	PopCap	240	E
Phantasy Star 0	8.0	Sega	248	E10+
Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Explorers of Sky	8.0	Nintendo	248	E
Pokémon Platinum Version	9.0	Nintendo	241	E
Professor Layton and the Diabolical Box	8.0	Nintendo	246	E10+
Puzzle Quest: Galactrix	8.0	D3Publisher	240	E10+
Rabbids Go Home	7.0	Ubisoft	249	E
Ragnarok DS	5.0	XSEED	252	E10+
Rhythm Heaven	9.0	Nintendo	241	E
Roogoo Attack	4.0	SouthPeak	243	E
Sands of Destruction	7.0	Sega	250	T
Scribblenauts	9.0	Warner Bros.	247	E10+
Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Survivor	8.0	Atlus	244	T
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	6.0	Sega	252	E
Space Bust-A-Move	7.0	Taito	245	E
Space Invaders Extreme 2	8.0	Square Enix	248	E
Spore Hero Arena	5.0	Electronic Arts	247	E
Star Wars Battlefront: Elite Squadron	5.5	LucasArts	249	E10+
Steal Princess	6.0	Atlus	241	E10+
Suikoden: Tierkreis	7.0	Konami	240	E10+
Super Robot Taisen OG Saga: Endless Frontier	7.0	Atlus	241	T
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Arcade Attack	4.5	Ubisoft	248	E10+
Tokyo Beat Down	6.0	Atlus	240	T
Touch Mechanic	5.0	Aspyr	241	E
TrackMania DS	7.0	Atlus	240	E
Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen	7.0	Activision	245	E10+
Valkyrie Profile: Covenant of the Plume	9.0	Square Enix	240	T
WireWay	6.5	Konami	249	E
A Witch's Tale	4.0	NIS America	247	E10+
The Wizard of Oz: Beyond the Yellow Brick Road	6.5	XSEED	246	E
WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2010	7.0	THQ	248	T
Zubo	6.5	Electronic Arts	240	E10+

MORE ON:

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: SPIRIT TRACKS

No series delivers the goods as consistently as The Legend of Zelda. Spirit Tracks provides the usual great mix of action and puzzle solving, and it fixes the main flaw of its predecessor (the need to replay big chunks of the main dungeon). I'm not the biggest fan of the train segments or the instant-death demon trains that go with them, but I love the new tools and the fresh direction of the story. —**CHRIS H.**

FANDOM

Mega Ran's Rhymes

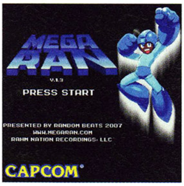
When rap and Rock Man collide.

HIP-HOP AND MEGA MAN may seem like a curious combination, but one rapper has dared to bridge that gap, and he's produced some amazing results. Raheem Jarbo is a man of many talents and interests. He worked for years as a middle-school teacher in Arizona, grew up playing NES classics and other games, and is a prolific independent rap artist. Although Jarbo typically performs under the name Random, he often dons the title of Mega Ran when busting out catchy rhymes that pay homage to the 8-bit days of the Blue Bomber.

Jarbo began rapping in the mid '90s and made his recording debut in 2006 with a highly political and hard-hitting hip-hop album titled *The Call*, which was well received. However, in the gaming world he's best known for the two incredible Mega Man-themed rap CDs he released in the years following—*Mega Ran* (2007) and *Mega Ran 9* (2009). Both albums feature sampled music from Mega Man games mixed with original beats, and they're among Jarbo's most popular work to date.

"After I finished recording and released *The Call*, I felt like I had said all I wanted to say as a rapper and had no idea where to turn for inspiration for a follow-up album," explains Jarbo, who stepped away from music completely for a time and spent a while getting reacquainted with some of his old favorite video games. He tells us, "While playing, I got inspired to work with the tunes from my favorite game series, Mega Man, and put myself into the shoes of the character. It was really fun to do that, because I had spent so many long hours as a kid playing these games, so to revisit that stage of my life revitalized me as a musician. I went from almost quitting music to almost quadrupling my output of music in the last few years."

The first Mega Ran album picked up a lot of press when it launched and even caught the attention of Capcom. Jarbo's initial fear about a possible lawsuit or cease-and-desist order melted into relief when the major game publisher instead expressed an interest in supporting his efforts and promoting the project. This sponsorship led to him performing at Comic-Con and several gaming conventions, to have an original song included on the *Marvel vs. Capcom Mixtape*, and to release another Mega Ran album shortly after Mega Man 9 launched on WiiWare. Response to both Mega Ran and Mega Ran 9 has been overwhelming, Jarbo says.

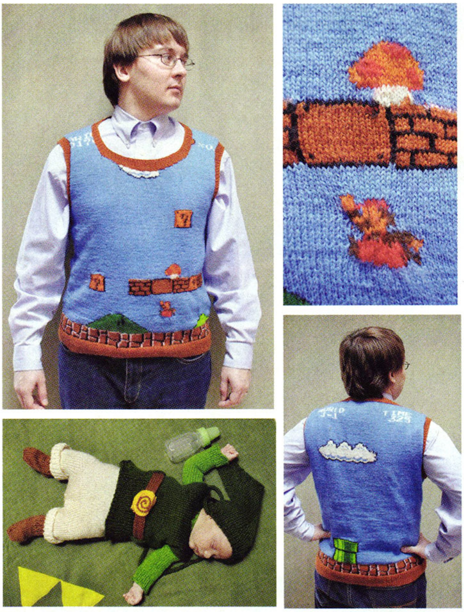


Mega Man and rap: two great tastes that taste great together.

To our delight, it was a cover story on Mega Man 2 in an early issue of Nintendo Power that first got Jarbo hooked on the series, and the second entry in the series is still by far his favorite. "Once I saw the article on it, Mega Man 2 hit the top of my Christmas list," Jarbo reminisces. So thank you, Nintendo Power; you guys started my Mega Man obsession." It wasn't until he beat Mega Man 2 that he went back to play the original, which he tells us took him a lot longer to complete.

A big part of what drew Jarbo to the Mega Man series and made him a serious fan is the way each game was created with music lovers in mind. "The music was just so spectacular," he recalls. "Mega Man 2 was the first game that had me humming and singing the music on the way to school. I had a tape recorder as a kid and used to sit the recorder next to the TV and record the themes and listen on the way to school in my Walkman."

Besides the Mega Ran albums, Jarbo has some other gaming-related music projects in the pipeline. He's currently teaming up with producer K-Murdock to create an album called *Forever Famicom* that will revolve around classic NES and Super NES games, including Metroid, Little Nemo: Dream Master, F-Zero, EarthBound, and Chrono Trigger. *Forever Famicom* is expected to be released some time in 2010 and will be accompanied by a full tour. Fans will have to wait and see if Mega Man 10 on WiiWare sparks Jarbo's inspiration for another Mega Ran album as well. Check out www.megaran.com for more information. **—NATHAN M.**



FANDOM

Dress for Success

Gaming's greatest icon inspires a homemade sweater vest.

COUNTLESS NINTENDO-THEMED T-shirts, hats, and accessories can be found at stores around the world, but we doubt you'll find anything remotely similar to this homemade sweater vest. Based on Level 1-1 of the original Super Mario Bros. for NES, the striking sweater vest comes to us from Joanna Rankin, a 25-year-old graphic designer and Flash developer from Toronto, Ontario.

Spurred on by the Internet fan response to a baby-Link outfit she knitted last fall, Rankin decided to take on another elaborate game-related project, this time for her husband (and lifelong gamer), Zen. But when choosing the level upon which to base the vest's design, she decided to go with one that even non-hardcore gamers might recognize.

"I chose Level 1-1 because to me, it's hands down the most iconic Mario Bros. level and arguably one of the most iconic classic game levels of all time," explains Rankin. "Everyone has played or seen this level, so I knew that people could relate to it.

Starting with a screenshot of the level as a reference, Rankin worked on the project over the course of four months during her spare time. She was so committed to nailing the look of the original level that when she was unable to find the correct shade of green yarn for the pipe and small bushes, she decided to custom-dye a ball of white yarn rather than compromise the look of the stage.

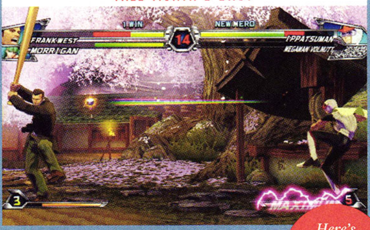
Rankin has since made a pattern for the sweater vest available for free on her website (happyseamstress.com), but it doesn't look like her husband will be parting with the original vest anytime soon. "He absolutely loves it," she says. "I think it will become a family heirloom for sure." **—ANDREW H.**

WRITE *your own* CAPTION

SCREEN TEST

SEND CAPTION TO **screentest@nintendopower.com**.

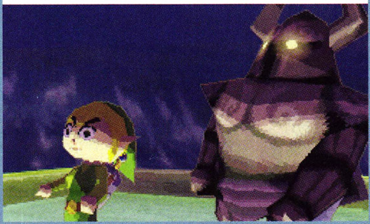
THIS MONTH'S SHOT



The craziest baseball game ever came to a tragic end due to Frank West refusing to keep his eye on the ball.

Here's our caption. THINK YOU CAN DO BETTER?

VOLUME 251'S SHOT



"You know what I really hate? Enchanted black suits of armor.... There's one right behind me, isn't there?" **—TIM H.**

"Link and Zelda were shocked to learn the truth of why they always felt like someone was watching them." **—YAKKY1**

"When asked the age old question 'Does this armor make me look fat?' Link knew the best response was to pretend he didn't hear it." **—RALPHER**

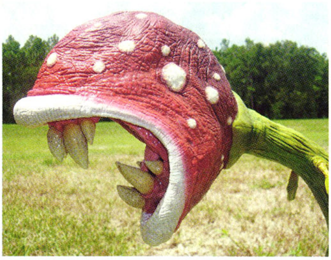
"Whoever decided to have Mario model for the swimsuit calendar deserves to be beaten!" **—TWISTEDARACHNID**

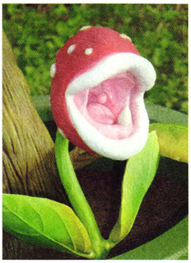
"What do you mean the princess is in another castle!?" **—DALTON C.**

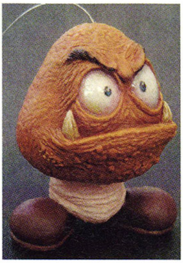
"Link and Zelda were disturbed when they found out the Phantom that Zelda had been possessing was, in fact, male." **—ROBOTORTOISE**

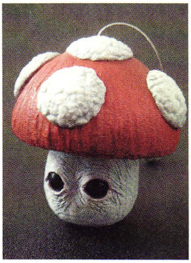
ABOVE *and* BEYOND

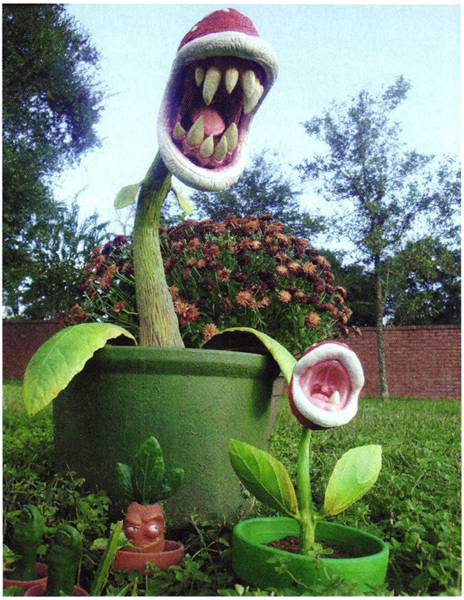
Got art, cosplay, case mods, etc.? Send them to us via email to **community@nintendopower.com** or via snail mail to Nintendo Power/Community c/o Future US, 4000 Shoreline Court, STE 400, South San Francisco, CA 94080. We'll print the best stuff!

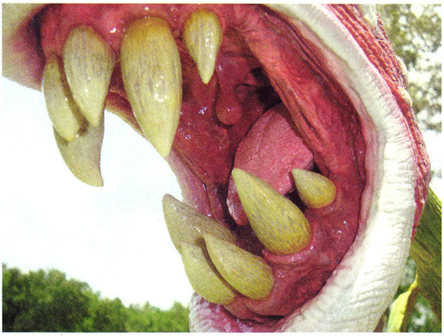


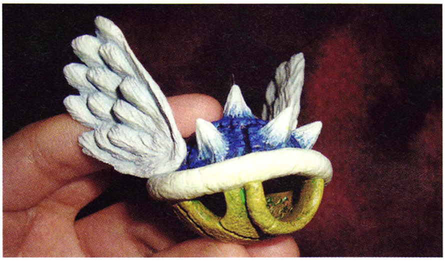












FANDOM

Plantastic!

Note to self: avoid green pipes!

EVEN THE MOST menacing foes in the Mario universe are brightly colored and cartoon-like, but what would some of these enemies look like if transplanted into the real world? The Piranha Plant might resemble the ferocious-looking sculpture seen here, designed by Jaime Margary, a 33-year-old freelance artist from Orlando, Florida.

Margary had previously created a series of plant sculptures, including a replica of the Audrey II Venus flytrap from *Little Shop of Horrors*, and was working on a more traditional re-creation of the Piranha Plant when he felt the urge to take his next project in a very different direction. "I kept wanting to deviate into something much more realistic," he explains. "So I decided to make another one where I could set that curiosity loose into my own interpretation of the iconic plant."

Drawing upon his experience studying human anatomy and sculpting techniques in Puerto Rico, Margary first dove into the project by reading up on oral anatomy and "flora and skin patterns in humans and elephants," then set to work on the painstaking creation process. In an effort to bring greater detail to the sculpture, he crafted each piece individually, using clay and acrylic paints, plus steel to reinforce the stem. Once completed, Margary decided to create a smaller baby counterpart, lightening the color scheme and basing the teeth and gums off those of a human infant.

Both sculptures were met with immense praise online, and a YouTube video about the larger sculpture's creation has netted nearly 200,000 views to date, but Margary isn't done with game-inspired artwork. Next on his agenda is a realistic interpretation of a Metroid infant submerged in formaldehyde, the visions of which have us both excited and slightly terrified! —**ANDREW H.**

EVENT

Chiptune Heroes

Chip-music jubilee Blip Festival 2009 cranks the fun to 11.

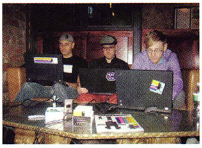
BEING THRUST INTO the midst of an erupting mosh pit full of revelers pumping their fists in the air and flailing around blissfully to sounds churned out of a Game Boy cranked through a sound system is surreal. That particular moment of cheerful chaos at Blip Festival 2009 was fueled by a group called Starscream. This duo of youngsters deftly wielded a drum set and a Game Boy to unleash a barrage of sci-fi-tinged electronic rock, coaxing some epic sounds from their instruments. To the fans and performers at this three-night event in Brooklyn, the concept of repurposing a Game Boy or other old-school gaming hardware as an instrument isn't at all unusual.

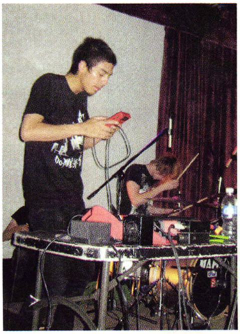
Held at The Bell House in mid December, the annual Blip Festival is a collaborative effort between Manhattan non-profit performing arts space The Tank and chiptune artist collective 8bitpeoples. The event draws scores of chiptune performers, retro-visualists, and fans from around the globe for several nights of intensely bleepy music and friendly camaraderie focused on a cornucopia of catchy sounds and pixelated visuals generated on old home computers and vintage video game hardware. Besides evening performances jam-packed with 8-bit music, Blip Festival 2009 also featured chiptune film screenings from 2 Player Productions, workshops on how to create music and visuals using old gaming hardware, and even an on-location collaborative game-making session between indie developers Gaijin Games (the folks behind the WiiWare Bit.Trip series) and Robotube Games (makers of the upcoming Bloktonik for WiiWare).

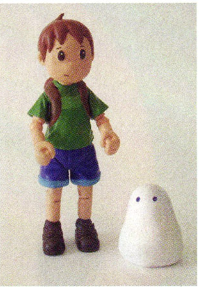
Musically, the styles and genres between Blip Festival performers ran the gamut from thumping techno to prog rock, and this diversity was easily one of the event's biggest draws. "The range of music coming from the different performers is pretty incredible," says 8bitpeoples cofounder Jeremiah Johnson, who also performs Game Boy music under the name Nullsleep and is heavily involved in putting the festival together each year. "The goal is to give people a representation of the current state of the chip-music scene and the people that are doing really interesting stuff," he tells us.

Well-established names in the NYC chiptune scene, such as Glomag, minusbaby, Bubblyfish, and Bit Shifter took the stage at different times throughout the chilly weekend to dish out a dance-worthy barrage of low-tech audio wizardry. They were joined by other musicians from around the US, with names like Fighter X, Rainbowdragoneyes, Little-Scale, Leeni, and Disasterpeace. Some artists even traveled from as far away as Hungary, Japan, Sweden, France, and Germany to unite for the weekend. "One of the nicest parts about Blip Festival is you take this community that spends all year long on a forum talking to the screen, throw them all together in a city for a week, and let them all just party and hang out together," notes Mike Rosenthal, director for The Tank and one of the event's main organizers.

The vibe at Blip Festival 2009 was upbeat, energetic, and extremely welcoming. Even among those who didn't partake of the kinetic happenings on the dance floor, the appreciation for the music and the people that create it was evident. Sold-out evenings saw the venue packed to the brim with concertgoers mingling among performers, enjoying spirits, and greeting 8-bit emissaries from foreign lands. Consistently crafting such a spectacular chiptune showcase of this magnitude with a meager budget and a small group of highly dedicated organizers is a tremendous effort. "From year to year it's a lot of work," admits Johnson, "but it's been really satisfying to be involved with it over the years, and I hope that we can keep doing it." We wholeheartedly agree. **—NATHAN M.**







FANDOM

Cuteness Overload

Spurred by the distinct hand-drawn style of A Boy and His Blob, reader Donald Kennedy from El Paso, Texas custom-made a set of figurines based on the Wii hit. "I love the imagery and art from the game," says Kennedy, a 29-year-old electrical engineer, husband, and father of three. "In my opinion, every good game should have a good toy, so I decided to make one."

Kennedy modified an action figure from the *Yotsuba&!* anime series to use as the base for the boy, cutting the arms, legs, and torso to fit the dimensions of the character, then used epoxy putty to sculpt the boy's hair and create the blob. The entire project took about three days, but Kennedy's quite skilled at this sort of thing: his paper-clip-based Mario Kart sculpture was featured in Volume 243, and he posts all of his custom gaming creations at kodykoala.com.

—ANDREW H.

Next issue is going to be a big one, with brand-new looks at some of the year's hottest games—including a snazzy new world reveal for Wii! Miss out on this one, and you might as well turn in your Nintendo Fan membership card.

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NEXT MONTH

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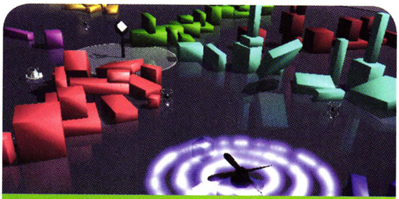

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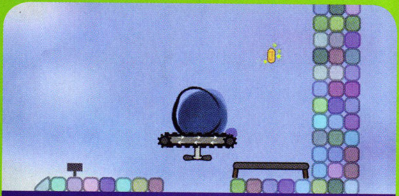

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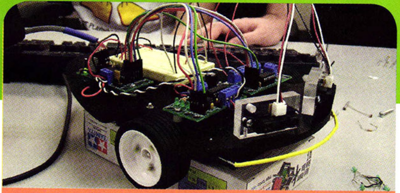

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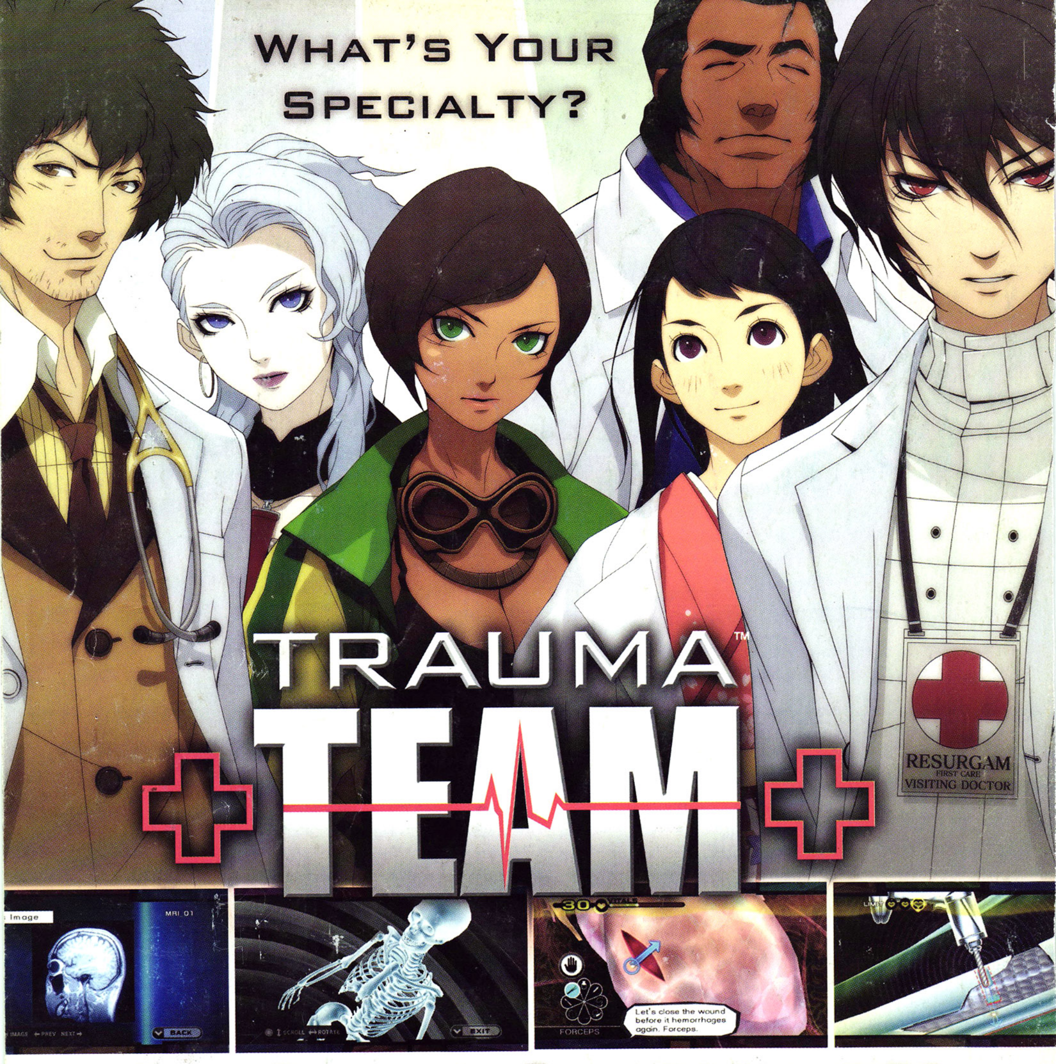
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